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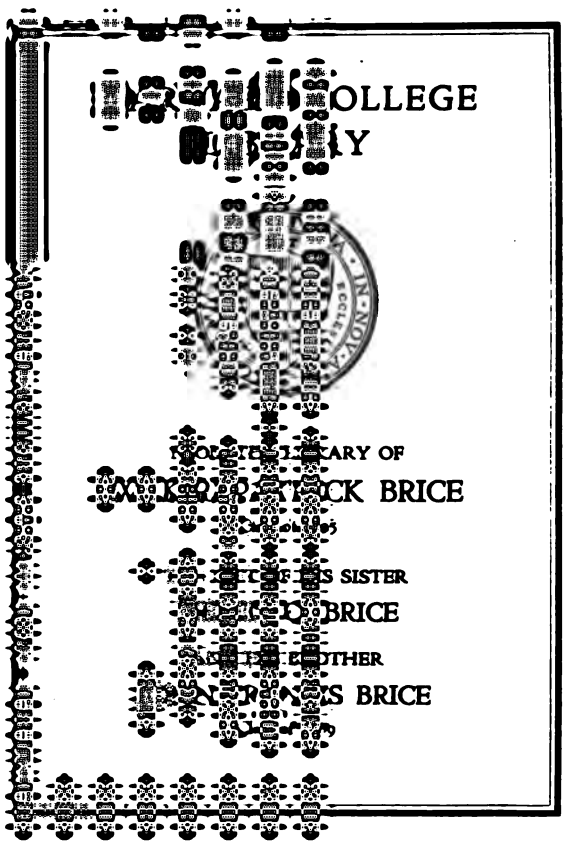

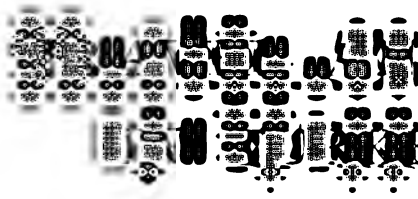

TRAVEL & SPORT IN TURKESTAN

BY

CAPTAIN J. N. PRICE WOOD

12TH ROYAL LANCERS

WITH ROUTE-MAP AND 100 ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS

NEW YORK
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1910

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PREFACE

I AM told by persons who are supposed to be "literary" that it is usual to write a preface, even when a book may be said to speak for itself; and as I know that in England what is "usual" has to be done or attempted, I pen these few misleading lines. I say misleading, since they are written after the book is printed, not before it is written, as apparently they should be to justify the heading.

I am also informed that it is correct to attribute an enterprise of this kind to the urgent solicitation of a wide circle of friends; but I cannot bring myself to utter such a palpable untruth. I wrote the Diary to please myself, and I have sent it to the printer with the same laudable object.

Of course I hope it may find favour in the eyes of some; though it may not please the million, I humbly trust it will not "make the judicious grieve."

That the shelves of libraries groan under the books about India I am well aware, and I have accordingly excluded all remarks which are the common property of tourists, and offer this volume merely as a personal narrative.

Between Rawal Pindi and Kabulsai a matter of 2500 miles (without reckoning detours for sporting purposes) had to be traversed under pre-railway conditions; and in the course of the journey I utilised in turn every species of local transport, viz., native ponies, camels, and yâks; the tonga and the tarantass.

The few necessary references to railway and postal communications will, I trust, be excused by sportsmen on the ground that there are still many home-staying people who confuse Turkestan with Turkey, and who believe that even now it is necessary to burn fires round a camp in Kashmir to scare the carnivora.

For my own part I consider the details of equipment and other practical information the most useful part of the following pages, as that sort of thing is necessarily the outcome of actual experience.

J. N. P. W.

HENLEY HALL, LUDLOW,
November 1909.

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INTRODUCTION

FOR two or three years before I actually left India, I had contemplated a shooting trip to the Thian Shan Mountains, on the borders of Mongolia; but the necessity of waiting my turn for leave, and the difficulty of getting permission from the Government of India to use the Gilgit Road, prevented me from making a start until May 1907.

I had, in the meantime, heard accounts of the successful expeditions of Lord Basing and Mr. Glyn in 1905, and of Colonel Appleton and Major Hussey in 1906, and had seen some of the trophies which these sportsmen had brought back to India on their return. These accounts of the sport, and the extraordinary size of the trophies obtained, made me more determined than ever to seize the first chance that offered of exploring the little-known shooting-ground afforded by this range, whose mountains divide the immense rainless area called the Tarim Basin from Russian Turkestan on the north-west and from Mongolia on the north, and which takes rank among the seven great mountain-systems of Asia as one of the finest highland regions in the world. Though

the highest peak in the Thian Shan, Mount Khan Tengri, does not attain to 24,000 feet, yet no one who has travelled among the arid hills north of Kashmir can fail to be struck with the beauty of the scenery among these mountains, which rivals on a still grander scale the beauties of the Valley of Kashmir itself.

Lord Basing and Mr. Glyn were most generous in giving me the benefit of their experiences, while the detailed information on what to take with me, and the best route to follow, with which Colonel Appleton was good enough to supply me, proved absolutely invaluable.

The Government of India is chary of its permits to unofficial travellers to use the Gilgit Road, and as the longer route, *viâ* Ladak and the Karakorum Pass, does not allow one to get to the shooting-grounds of the Thian Shan sufficiently early in the season, I was kept in a state of uncertainty till February 1907, when at last I got news that my application to travel by the Gilgit route had been granted.

The season during which the Gilgit Road can be used is limited by the state of the Burzil Pass (13,500 feet high), which generally becomes practicable by the end of April or the beginning of May, and is closed at the end of October or early in November, according to the weather.

Thus, if a traveller intends to return to India, his stay in the Thian Shan region must, owing to the distance to be travelled within six months, be very limited. Six weeks on the shooting-ground is the most that can be hoped for.

Six weeks seemed to me too short a time in which, unless exceptionally lucky, to make a good bag; and so I applied to the Russian Government to be allowed to return to England *viâ* the Turkestan Railway. Though such permission to a traveller from India had not been granted for some years, I was fortunate enough to secure the indulgence I had asked for.

This concession meant that, instead of being limited to a few weeks on my shooting-ground, I could stay there as long as the climate permitted.

My original intention was to try for *Ovis poli* on the Pamirs *en route*, then strike across Turkestan, enter the Thian Shan by the Mozart Pass, and spend three months in the mountains at the head of the Tekkes Valley, shooting wild sheep (*Ovis karelini*), ibex, wapiti, and Siberian roe. After I had done this I proposed to recross the Mozart Pass and spend December looking for long-haired tiger and Yarkand stag in the swamps by Maralbashi, making my way back to England from there by Kashgar, Andijan, and the Tashkent-Orenburg Railway.

The swamps about Maralbashi are said to be too deep to wade, and too thick with reeds to get through with a boat, and even were this not the case, life in them is rendered unendurable to human beings during the summer months by the myriads of vicious mosquitoes with which they swarm. They freeze during the latter part of December, and only then does it become practicable to shoot in them.

Events, however, caused me to give up the chase at Kulja, which lies north of the Thian Shan, in November.

The Government of India, in giving me leave to use the Gilgit Road, informed me that I must not leave Bandipur, a little village at the head of the Woolar Lake, in Kashmir, before May 15th, and I think their reason for imposing this restriction was to prevent the accidents, which have sometimes occurred to travellers trying to cross the Burzil early in the season on unfavourable days. Had I been returning to India, this restriction would have made my expedition not worth while, as it would have limited my time on my shooting-ground to a month at the outside. Solicitude for my welfare was perhaps not the only reason for the official time-limit, since sportsmen who only wanted to shoot in Astor, just the other side of the pass, were allowed to cross at the usual date—*i.e.* about May 1st.

On May 5th, after saying good-bye to my brother officers, I left Umballa by the Punjab mail, and, after fourteen hours in the train, reached Rawal Pindi in time for dinner. Next morning, after loading up my rifles, and such luggage as I had not sent on in advance, on one of Dhanjibhoy's tongas, I started for Kashmir, and, after three days on the road, reached Srinagar. Nearly all travellers to Kashmir enter it by this well-known road, which reaches the foot of the hills about 12 miles from Pindi, and then ascends some 5000 feet in 26 miles to Murree.

Murree is the summer headquarters of the Northern Army, and a large station. From it the road descends for the next 23 miles without interruption, till at last the Jhelum River is reached at Kohala.

At Kohala is the last dâk bungalow (*i.e.* rest-house) in British territory. The road here crosses the Jhelum by a suspension bridge into the Kashmir state.

Kashmir, though the great majority of the people are Mohammedans, is ruled by a Hindu. Consequently, as the killing of cattle is against the religious scruples of the Maharajah, beef cannot be obtained in the country. It used, therefore, to be the custom for Europeans returning to India, to take the first opportunity, as soon as they had

crossed the border, of making a change from mutton, and beefsteak at Kohala became a tradition.

After crossing the bridge the road follows the left bank of the great river, which rushes through its narrow gorge at a tremendous pace, until some 130 miles further on it emerges into the Valley of Kashmir at Baramulla, and, hedged on both sides by tall poplars, makes straight for Srinagar.

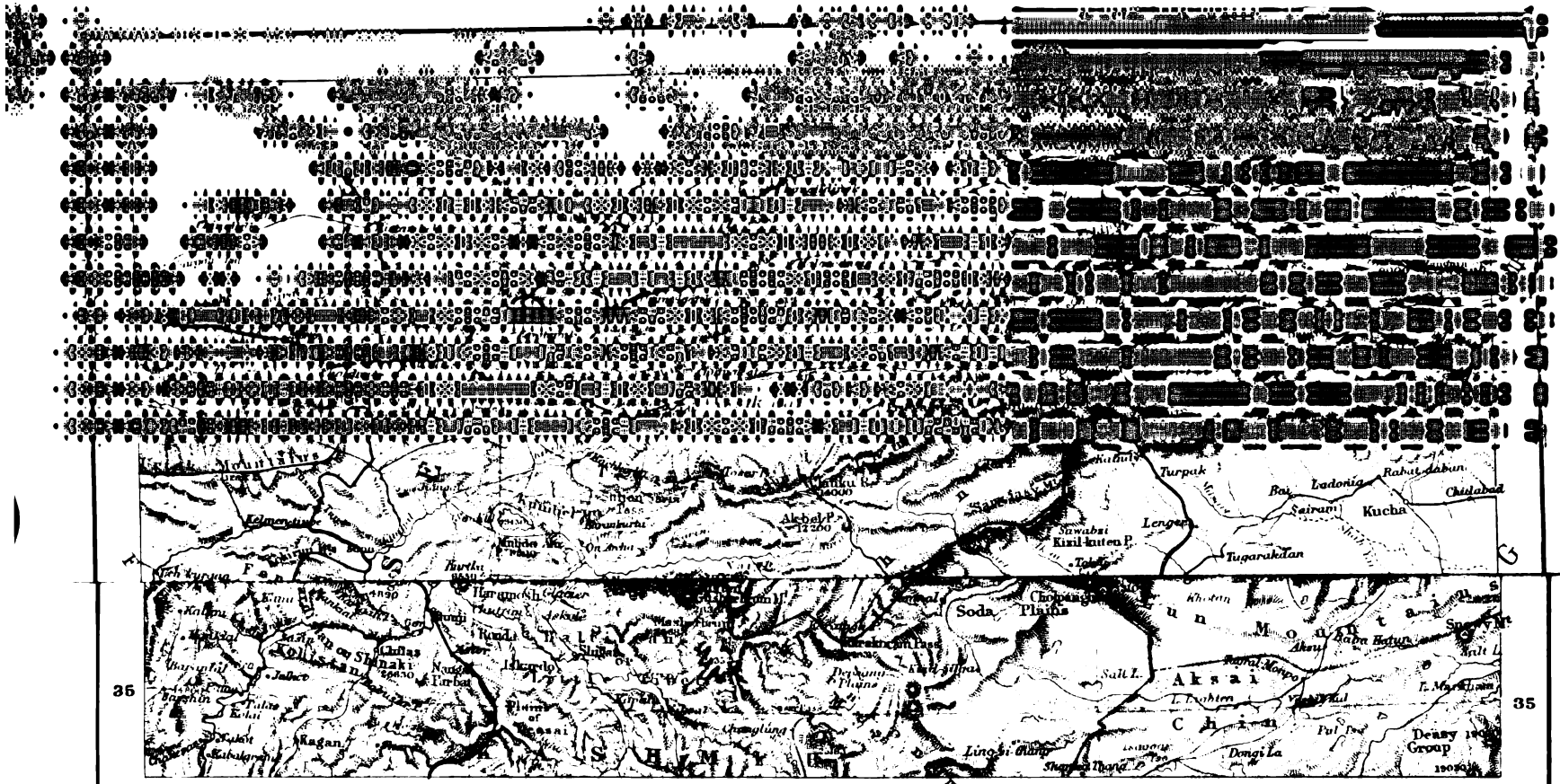
For the benefit of those who have not travelled in one, I may perhaps be allowed to explain here that a tonga is a low two-wheeled cart, covered with a tilt, and capable of seating three people besides the driver. One passenger sits beside the latter, while the other two face the rear. The seats are narrow, and slope backwards just enough to make the rear passengers feel inclined to slide off, while little particles of iron, which are rubbed off the cross-bar as the ponies go, make it advisable for the front passenger to wear glasses to protect his eyes. A hundred miles between daylight and dark is a good day's journey in a tonga on the Kashmir Road, and most people discover that their seats are getting most unpleasantly hard some time before they have completed that distance. The pole of the tonga slopes upwards from below the centre of the body to the ponies' withers, where it is used to balance the vehicle by means of an iron cross-bar secured to saddles on

the ponies' backs. This also serves the purpose of enabling the ponies to hold back on hills, the pulling being done by means of traces.

At Srinagar I found some heavy kit awaiting me which I had sent on ahead of me in an ekka, or native cart. These ekkas are drawn by a single miserable-looking country pony, and look something like a parrot cage on wheels, but if well horsed and lightly loaded, will sometimes cover 70 miles in 24 hours, or, if allowed plenty of time, will convey as much as five maunds (410 lbs.) of luggage.

On arrival at Srinagar I put up at Nedou's Hotel, where I met Messrs. Turner-Henderson and Holmes Tarn, who were preparing for an expedition to Kashgar *viâ* Leh and the Karakorum.

From 9th to 14th of May there was plenty to do in arranging about servants, stores, clothes, &c.; but at last my shopping was all finished, and with the impedimenta which I have detailed in an Appendix, I resolved to set out immediately.



Author's Route shown in Red

W. & A. K. Johnston, Limited, Edinburgh & London

Natural Scale 1:4,978,779 - 78·5 miles to an Inch

50 0 50 100 Miles

TRAVEL AND SPORT IN TURKESTAN

CHAPTER I

THE STARTING-POINT

By the evening of May 14th everything was packed and ready, and as there was a dance going on at Nedou's Hotel, where I had been staying, I made my adieux at dinner, went on board my doonga, and to bed. A doonga is a sort of house-boat with a grass roof, and sides composed of screens of matting, familiar to every one who has been to Kashmir.

My caravan consisted, besides myself, of Abdul Aziz (caravan bashi or headman), Habiballah (personal servant), Amid Dar (cook), and Azdullah (orderly). All these men were Kashmiri Mohammedans, Abdul and Azdullah having a good deal of Pathan blood in them. The two former had been to the Thian Shan before and could speak Turki, and the other two quickly learnt to make themselves

understood, being, like most Kashmiris, excellent linguists.

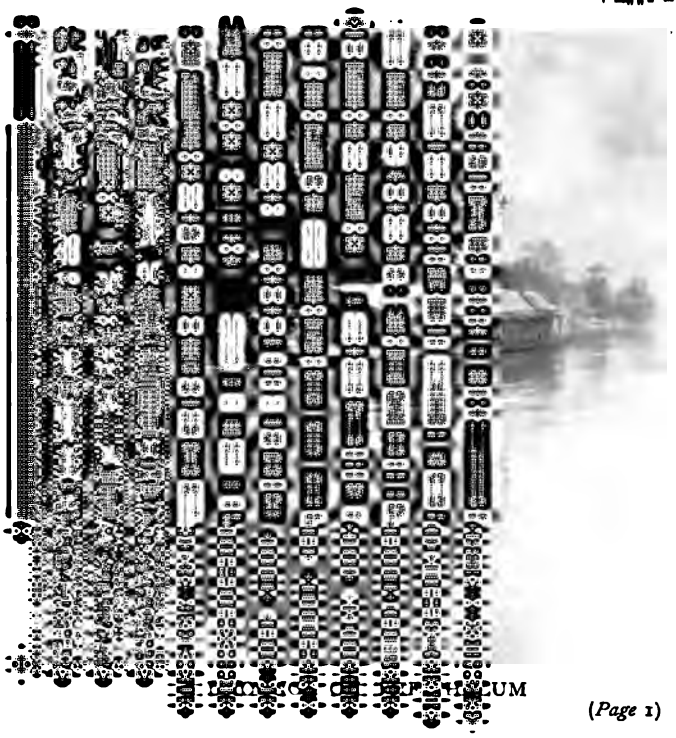
I consider that three men would have been sufficient, but having been assured that four were necessary, I thought it better to be on the safe side.

Awaking early next morning I found myself sailing down the Jhelum River through Srinagar, and eventually, as a storm had come up, and it was unsafe to cross the Woolar Lake, we moored for the night in the stream near where it enters the lake.

On May 16th we crossed the Woolar Lake in the early morning and reached Bandipur at 8 A.M. This village is situated at the north end of the lake, and it is usual for parties starting for Baltistan, Astor, and Gilgit to join the Gilgit road here. The coolies I had ordered to be ready did not turn up till 1.30, the excuse being cholera in the villages, and on this account we did not reach our first halting-place, the dâk bungalow at Tragbul, till 8.30, some of the baggage not arriving till after dark. As, however, I needed forty-seven coolies to carry all my loads, this delay was not surprising.

A few miles from Bandipur the road crosses a mountain stream by a good bridge. The method of construction is characteristic of the country, but the hand of the British engineer is evident in its solid finish. When a native builds a

PLATE 1



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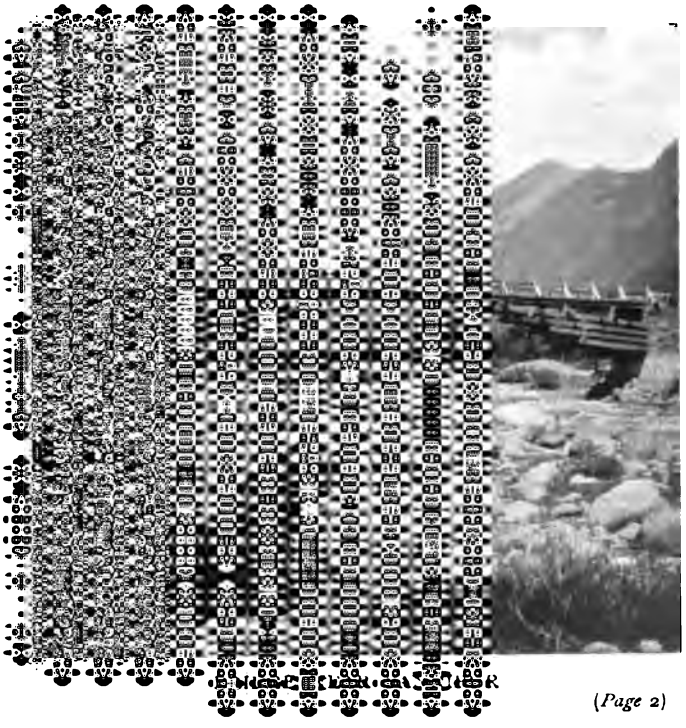


(*Page* 2)

cantilever bridge without European supervision he usually weights the ends of his logs with the largest stones he can get, but leaves them loose instead of building them in. Timber is plentiful in the Valley of Kashmir, and by making use of it in this way it is possible to avoid making piers in mid-stream, and thus the risk of the bridges being swept away by floods when the snows melt is minimised.

From this bridge the road begins to ascend, and a mile or two further on the real climb commences. The road (a rather misleading term, as it is never used for wheeled traffic) now begins to zig-zag up the face of the hill. A little above the first turn I found a large snake lying in the middle of the track, and having no other weapon at hand tried to kill it by heaving rocks at it. While thus engaged I suddenly saw another large snake dart across the road behind and within a yard of me. Both were dark in colour, about 30 inches in length, and had diamond-shaped heads. Abdul (my caravan bashi) said they were a poisonous kind.

After a climb of nearly 4500 feet, we at length reached the Tragbul rest-house, which stands about 9450 feet above sea-level. My servants speedily had a fire going for me, and although I had been hot enough while moving, I was very glad of the warmth it afforded.

The view from here, looking back over the Valley of Kashmir, is to my thinking absolutely magnificent, and it is all the more striking when seen after months spent marching among the tumbled waste of mountains which stretch for hundreds of miles around it.

Once outside Kashmir, except where the mountain streams are artificially led to irrigate some piece of ground less steep than that surrounding it, the traveller will hardly see a green shrub, tree, or patch of grass, and these oases are often several miles apart. For the rest, from the torrent at the bottom of the valley to the snows of the peaks far above his head the mountain side seems all bare rock, sand, or shale at the steepest angle at which it will stand.

Once south of the Tragbul one can sit down on a perfect carpet of wild flowers, and, looking over the pine forests which clothe the hillside immediately beneath, see first the fields, farms, and fruit trees which lie between the foot of the hill and Bandipur, then the Woolar Lake shining in the sun 5000 feet below.

Beyond the lake again are more fields, woods, and villages plainly visible, till miles away they melt into the lower slopes of the mountains which separate Kashmir from India. These, rising first in gentle slopes, then by steep rocky precipices, and

finally from a sharply defined snow-line to a mass of glittering peaks, seem like the fairy rampart of an enchanted land. Across the very centre of this view runs a glittering silver streak—the Jhelum River—at once the highroad of the country and its principal pleasure ground.

On May 17th I heard the coolies starting about 5 A.M., but did not set out myself till nearly 7 A.M. This is much too late to start when crossing a pass, as the going is best while the snow is still hard from the previous night's frost, but I experienced no difficulty, and reached Gurai, after a long halt on the way, at 1 P.M., the coolies getting in about 4 P.M. My aneroid at the top of the Tragbul Pass (11,800 feet) registered 12,800 feet, so an error of 1000 feet occurs somewhere.

About an hour after starting I met Mr. Appleford, who is in charge of the road. He had come from the other side of the Burzil Pass, and was on his way to Bandipur inspecting the damage done to the road by the melting snows and avalanches which destroy it at many points every spring.

Gurai, about 9000 feet above sea-level, is a place I remember, because there I broke my maximum thermometer while trying to set it. Here I saw three barasingh does, and a stag which had shed his horns. They were going north.

CHAPTER II

THE BURZIL PASS, ASTOR, AND GILGIT

May 18th.—We left Gurai about 7.15, and, crossing the Kishengunga River by the suspension bridge, reached Gurais, after an hour's halt for lunch, at 2 P.M. The coolies arrived about 4 o'clock and I paid them off. The elms down by the Kishengunga were just breaking into leaf as we passed; one little clump, on a bit of flat ground in a bend of the river, are particularly fine trees, and during the heat of summer it is pleasant to camp in their shade. The valley by Gurais is particularly broad; but instead of every available piece of moderately level ground being under cultivation, as is usual among the hills, here quite a lot is allowed to remain pasture. Height of dâk bungalow, 8040 feet.

May 19th.—Left Gurais at 8.45 and reached Peshwari at 2 P.M., having halted an hour on the way. Valley covered with pines on east, but bare grass slopes on west. Saw four ibex opposite dâk bungalow (height, 9200 feet).

(*Page 7*)

(*Page 10*)

May 20th.—Left Peshwari at 7.15 and reached Burzil rest-house (11,300 feet), which is at the foot of the Pass, at 1.30, having had one hour's halt on the way. Wind now very cold to stand in, but I got quite hot walking the last four miles, which were over snow, to the bungalow. As I knew we should have to start next morning before daylight, I took a photograph of the approach to the Pass from near this rest-house.

May 21st.—Left Burzil about 4.40 A.M., and reached the hut on the top of the Pass at 7.15 A.M. My aneroid gave the height of this *col* as 15,000 feet, the true height being 13,500 feet.

I set the aneroid to agree with the known height, and found it afterwards, by comparison with my maps, to be accurate at high altitudes but unreliable below 5000 feet.

I lay down on my waterproof and went to sleep for an hour, and then went on five miles to the next hut, where I had tiffin. Leaving this refuge at 10.30, we reached Chillum Choki (11,400 feet) at 1.15 P.M. For the last mile and a half, where the snow had melted, the road was about six inches deep in water or very slippery mud. When the coolies, who had started at 3 A.M., did arrive at 5 P.M., I paid them off, as the ponies ordered to meet us from Astor had turned up and were waiting to take us on.

About 6 P.M. a sleet storm, which would have been very unpleasant if it had caught us on the Pass, came on. The distance from Burzil to Chillum Choki is about six and a half miles, but although the summit of the Pass is only 13,500 feet above sea-level, and the approaches are not very steep, yet, owing to the storms and avalanches to which it is subject, it is unsafe from November to May, and so closes the Gilgit road for six months of the year.

The Pass is crossed by the dâk runners (postmen) when the weather is favourable during the winter time, but even as late as May the Pass is dangerous in bad weather, and some lives are lost on it annually. The huts already mentioned are erected by Government to afford shelter to the dâk runners in the event of a storm coming on before they can get clear of the Pass. A year or two previously two sportsmen, whose shikaries, in their anxiety to secure coveted markhor nullahs in Astor, had urged their sahibs to make the attempt in unfavourable weather, lost all their coolies and entire outfit in an avalanche. A considerable distance had been traversed when the coolies took fright and turned back, but hardly had they done so when an avalanche fell and swept them all away. The two sahibs and their shikaries escaped by what almost seemed a

miracle, as they were within a few yards of the string of coolies. This happened towards the end of April or early in May.

When crossing a pass it is necessary to start very early in order to reach one's next halting-place before the sun has had time to melt the surface of the snow, which freezes hard again every night. When once the snow gets soft, not only is the labour of walking quadrupled but danger from avalanches is incurred.

May 22nd.—Did not start till about 8.15, and reached Gudhai (9300 feet), after three-quarters of an hour's halt, at 2 P.M. At Chillum, as we descended, we first passed through a belt of dwarf juniper, then one of silver birches, then came the willows in the river bed, and then some scattered pines, and below them again the wild roses which were just budding at this time. The valley narrowed as it deepened, and became more stony, while the sun was strong enough to make marching quite hot work.

May 23rd.—Started at 7.45. The trees gradually showed more leaf as we descended, till, by the time we reached Astor (8300 feet), they were almost in full leaf. Unluckily the valley which the road traverses is so deep that we did not get much more than a glance at Nunga Purbat.

This giant is one of the finest mountains in the Himalayas, being over 26,620 feet high, and is

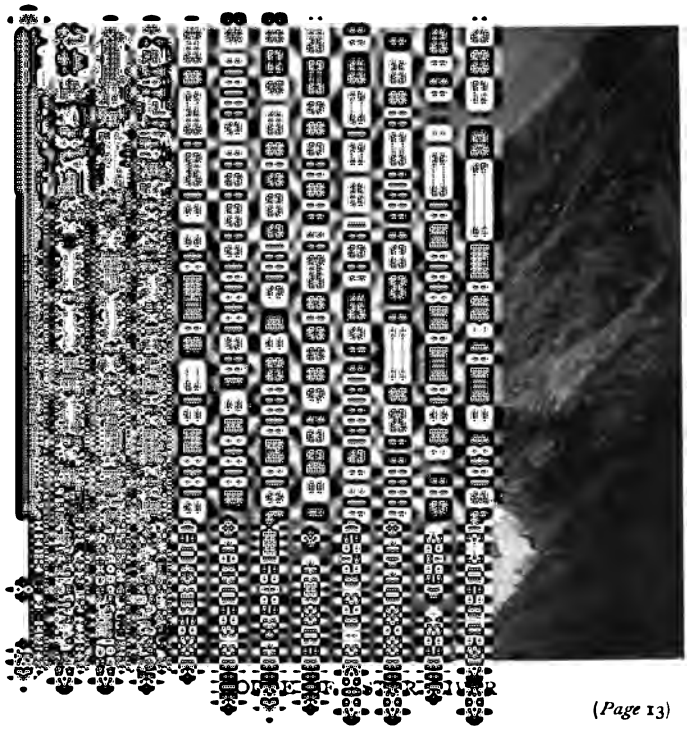
visible miles away towering over the rest of this part of the range.

The road crosses the Astor River by a suspension bridge about five miles from Astor. I unwisely crossed this bridge without dismounting, and it swayed about a good deal, but fortunately my pony took this as a matter of course. The view from the dâk bungalow to Astor Fort and the hills beyond is very fine.

Abdul, whom I had been warned against as a villain, came to me here with many explanations of his conduct, and tried to induce me to regard him as a man cruelly maligned by his enemies. I hoped this was the case, but, knowing what these men are, did not believe all I heard. I had engaged him as my headman, on the principle that it was better to have a man of whom I knew the worst than to be robbed by one reputed honest.

Got in about 2 P.M. rather peevish, for the sun was hot and I did not get lunch till late. The Astor district is well known among sportsmen, as in it are several good markhor nullahs, and a good markhor head is perhaps the finest trophy obtainable in India, as it certainly is the most handsome. The ground, however, as is fitting for the haunt of a wild goat, is very steep, and unless a sportsman is possessed of a steady head as well as sound lungs

PLATE 3



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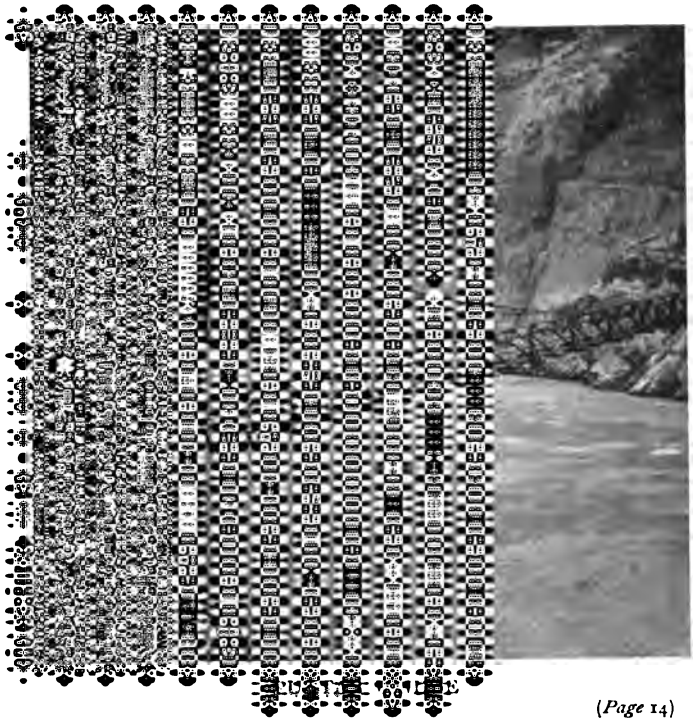

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and good legs he had better not commence his hill shooting in Astor. Though the ground looks as if heavy rains had swept away every bit of soil, it is a dry country, and the hillsides, until minutely inspected, do not look as if they would provide any animal with food. In fact all the hills look as if they were crumbling to pieces.

May 24th.—Left Astor about 8.30, and reached Dashkin (8500 feet), after a long halt at a village about two-thirds of the way. This march took about four and a half hours.

I met here Colonel Kettlewell, who was on his way back to Kashmir, having bagged two fair markhor and a 44-inch ibex.

From Astor the road first descends sharply, then runs alongside the river for some way, and then ascends again to Dashkin. The lower slopes of the hills here are very steep, and indeed just above the torrent are little better than precipices. The crops were now about a foot high, and I noticed walnuts beginning to form on the trees. When leaving Astor the *Lumbadar* (village headman), and *Chowkidar* (constable), thinking I would give them more backshish, brought what I had given them back to me. I promptly put it back in my pocket and marched off, leaving them lamenting.

At this halt Habiballah, my personal servant,

came to me with a complaint that he was not getting any meat! The fact is, Kashmiris surpass the "daughters of the horse-leech" in crying "Give, give." They hardly ever get meat in their villages, but being clothed, fed, mounted, well paid and found at my expense, it naturally occurs to them to ask for more. I eased my tongue on Habiballah, and told him that I give my servants a sheep when I have had any sport, but not while doing easy marches along a good road. I had little doubt that some of the chickens and mutton bought for master "went bad" rather before their time—anyhow Habiballah's shadow did not visibly decrease.

May 25th.—Left Dashkin at 8 A.M., and reached Doian at 11.30. We passed through a nice tract of pine forest above Mushkin, but it does not come up to Durand's description of it in "The Making of a Frontier"; still it is a pleasant change from the bare hillsides which are all one sees elsewhere in the Indus Valley.

The road ascends most of the way from Dashkin to Doian, till just above the latter place it begins to descend sharply after rounding a shoulder, whence one gets the first view of the Indus. It was cloudy all this day, and we had two or three rainstorms in the afternoon. Some rain must also have fallen in the Indus Valley—a most unusual thing according

to Durand. Rain is bad for shikar but is a relief when marching in these hot valleys. I did a little rifle practice here with the .22, which shot accurately but high. Doian is 8500 feet above sea-level.

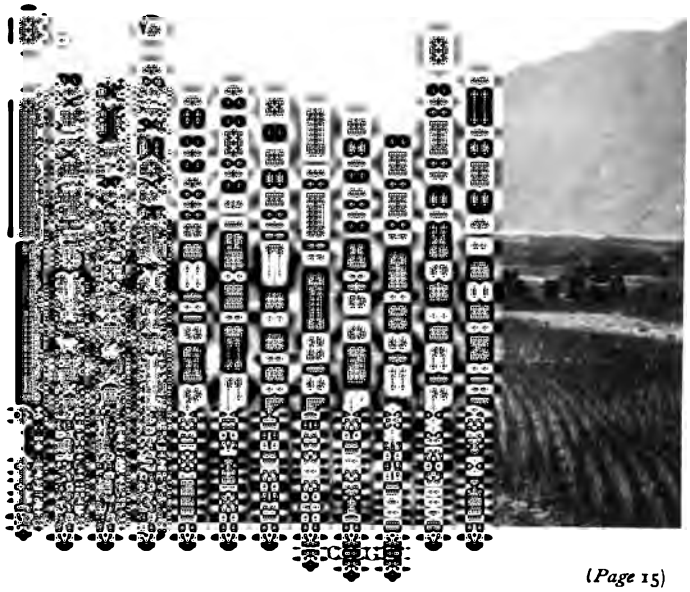
May 26th.—Left Doian at 7 A.M. The road drops down to the level of the Indus (some 4000 feet in eleven miles) to Ram Ghat, where there is a bridge over the Astor River. It first descends for some four miles, then rises to surmount a shoulder which goes sheer down to the river, and then drops again. The old road, visible on the opposite side of this horrible gorge, must have deserved all the abuse that has been lavished on it; for it is only a goat-track, and goes up and down to avoid the precipice. At Ram Ghat, which is a triangular oasis with sides perhaps 100 yards in length, I rested an hour, then rode on and reached Bunji about 2 P.M. Bunji (4600 feet) is an oasis which was formerly the Kashmir penal colony. Here I found that my pony men could not even be trusted to look after their own ponies, for, as soon as they had taken the loads off the animals' backs, they tied them up close together, and then all went away. The result was that a mare in foal got kicked in the stomach and died.

The Indus Valley is here, where it is joined by the Astor Gorge, about two miles wide, and is

apparently blocked to the south by the huge mass of Nunga Purbat, and to the north beyond Gilgit by the peaks surrounding Rakapushi. Unluckily to-day Nunga Purbat was wearing his cloud cap, and it was useless trying to take his portrait.

May 27th.—Left Bunji at 7.15, and reached Purtab Bridge at about 9.45. The road so far runs along the desert-like Indus Valley, and crosses the river at the suspension bridge, which is dated 1892, and named in honour of the present Maharajah.

As may be seen from the accompanying illustration, the Indus at this point is no mean stream, and the roadway a very considerable height above the water. Yet at the time of my visit a flood was expected, which made the authorities consider the advisability of dismantling this bridge lest it should be swept away. It was reported that a landslip had occurred which had blocked up one of the side nullahs, and dammed up the small tributary of the Indus which it contained. Behind this dam a huge lake was slowly forming, and would in time burst the barrier retaining it, and sweep in a huge wave down the river. Many years ago this actually happened on a large scale, and not only were the villages and cultivation which then flourished near Bunji wiped out, but many miles away, where the river debouches into the plains of the Punjab, a Sikh



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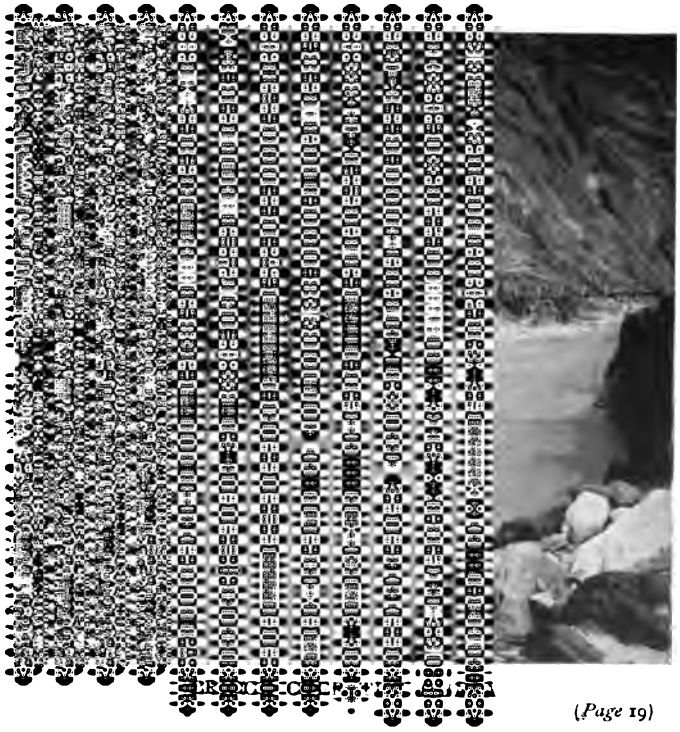

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army encamped on its banks was annihilated. "As an old woman sweeps away an army of ants with a wet cloth, so the river swept away the army of the Maharajah."

The road then climbs 300 feet or 400 feet up the cliff on the right bank of the Indus, and branches up the Gilgit Valley. The Gilgit River joins the Indus about one and a half miles above the bridge. From this point the road gradually descends again to the bungalow at Safed Pari ("White Cliff"), seventeen miles from Bunji, which we reached about 2.15 P.M., having halted an hour at the bridge. We were very lucky in the weather, which again was cloudy, and though warm not unpleasantly hot.

May 28th.—Left Safed Pari at 7.15, and reached Gilgit, after three-quarters of an hour's rest, at 3 P.M. A Punjabi, who had a nice little orchard half way, had regaled me with some mulberries while I was resting under the grateful shade of his little oasis of fruit-trees. The fruit was gathered for me by one of his sons, who climbed up into the trees to shake down the mulberries, while another below caught them in a cloth as they fell. The road is very bare, except in two places where streams coming down from the mountains enable the natives to irrigate, and consequently cultivate, a few acres of ground.

Gilgit is quite a big oasis, perhaps four or

five miles long. When I first saw it, it looked very refreshing with its green crops and trees in full leaf, after the barren stony mountains which border the Indus. The houses of the European residents are at the foot of the low hill in the middle distance on the left, and below them are the town and barracks of the Kashmir garrison.

Only one European officer was in Gilgit at the time of my visit; the remainder had gone a few miles north to higher elevation, as Gilgit was now getting fairly warm. Mr. Hodgkins, the officer in question, was most hospitable, and allowed me to purchase some whisky from him: this was particularly kind of him, as it is by no means easy to lay in fresh stores in Gilgit should the supply of anything get short. I found I was very tired after the last march, though as I had ridden most of the way, I did not think that the heat would have affected me so much.

May 29th.—At Gilgit. I wrote letters, bought enough flour and rice to last me and my Kashmiris as far as Yarkand, arranged for any letters, which might arrive in time, to be sent after me, and changed my remaining notes (Rs. 1080) for cash.

This last I was able to get done by the courtesy of the Governor, as owing to the necessity of paying the regiment quartered there, the Kashmir Government has a "Treasury" in Gilgit.

Here I received two English mails, and also a letter from Umballa which gave an amusing account of various people's preparations for the native rising which they anticipated was to take place on 10th May. One lady at least appears to have slept with all her jewellery fastened to her night-dress, and with a hatchet by her bedside.

Mr. Hodgkins had told me of a record markhor, measuring 61½ inches, which Captain Barstow (the inspecting officer of the native troops in the Agency) had had the luck to shoot, so in the afternoon I walked up to that officer's bungalow, and, in the owner's absence, persuaded his native orderly to show me the head, which was indeed a beauty. When I got back I felt rather limp, but thinking this was only due to the heat, I gladly accepted an invitation to dinner.

May 30th.—When I went out to dinner last night I had fever, and this got worse, so I had to leave early. I had intended to march this morning, but was obliged to lie up instead. Captain Barstow (28th Dogras) and his wife arrived about 11 A.M. from Nomal, on their way to Gulmerg; he is "Military Assistant" to the Political Agent.

CHAPTER III

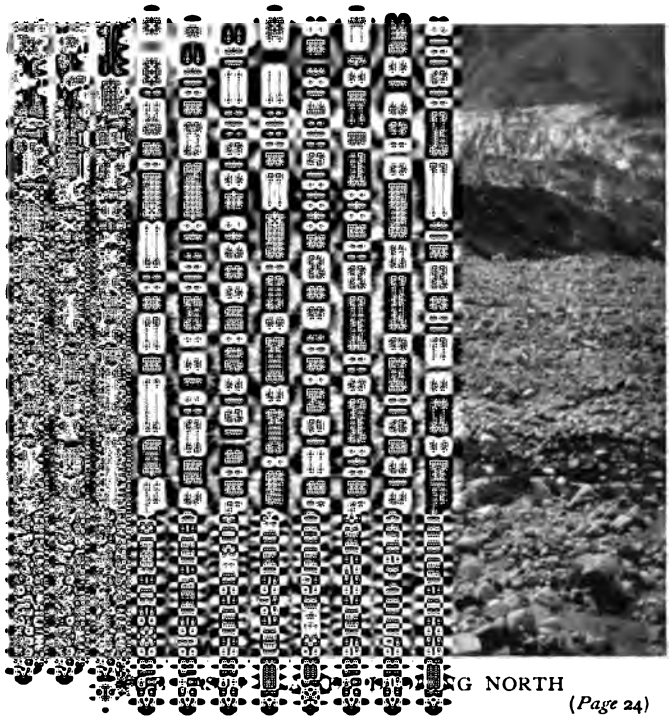
THE HUNZA ROAD

May 31*st*.—Having quite recovered I marched at 7. Barstow gave me breakfast, and went with me as far as the suspension bridge over the Gilgit River. Mr. Hodgkins told me that he was anxious about this bridge, as well as about the Purtab Bridge, on account of a flood which was expected to come down as soon as the dam formed by a glacier blocking a tributary stream should burst. The extent of this expected flood may be imagined, as the bridge is perhaps 300 feet span, and the roadway is some 40 to 50 feet above the water.

The road now runs south-east for three miles, and then turns the corner of the spur separating the Gilgit and Hunza Rivers. Then it again bends north as far as Nomal (18 miles from Gilgit), which I reached at about 12.30. This is about the easiest march I have had so far.

June 1*st*.—Left Nomal at 7.45 and reached Chalt about 1 P.M. Most of the old road which ran on the conglomerate cliffs near the river has been washed

PLATE 5



G NORTH

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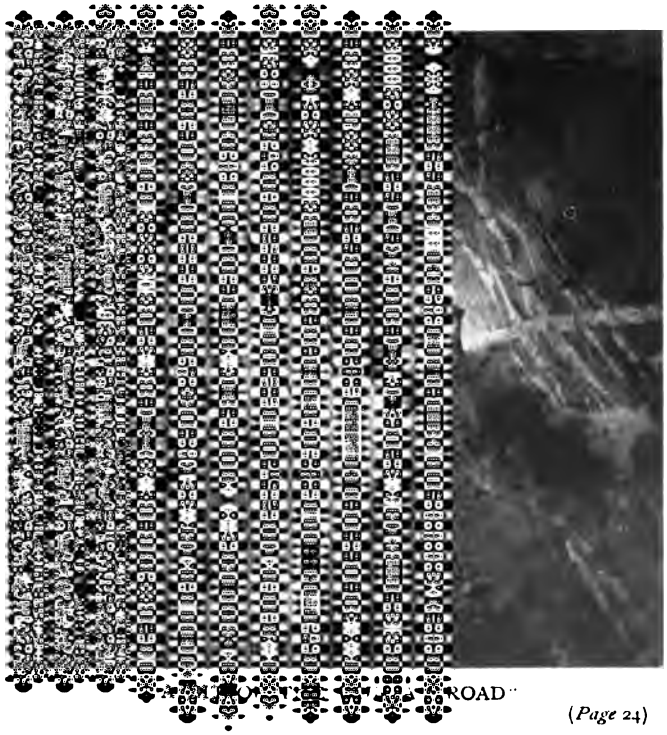


ROAD

(*Page* 24)

away by floods; in fact one is even now expected down the Hunza River from the same cause as on the Gilgit River. A new road is being cut along the face of the precipitous cliffs at a higher level, but this road is not yet finished, and the track in present use is partly along the sandy river-bed. Consequently one has to keep climbing up and down to circumvent the cliffs, the face of which the water washes.

Had a shot at a chuckor (partridge) with the .22, but missed; soon after, however, I managed to bag a pigeon. At Chalt is a nice dâk bungalow—the last I shall see for many a day. The two younger brothers of the petty Rajah came to call on me, and I entertained them with tea and jam. Found a supply of magazines and illustrated papers in the bungalow. Met Dr. and Mrs. Macanister on their way to Gilgit.

June 2nd.—Left Chalt at 7.45, and had to go some one and a half miles out of my way up a side nullah to a bridge over a tributary of the Hunza River which runs down it, and then to retrace my steps, but on the opposite bank of this last stream, till I regained the main Hunza Valley. The road from here is cut high across the face of the cliff, and there is an almost vertical drop from it into the river. A little further on it descends and crosses the Hunza River by a suspension bridge at Secun-

derabad. Here there is a piece of comparatively level ground, which the Rajah of Nagar has lately brought under cultivation by making a long piece of water-duct across the face of the hill. It is impossible in these rainless valleys to grow any crops without irrigation, so the villagers construct channels to convey water by gravitation to every piece of ground which has any claims to be considered level.

After crossing this new cultivation the road descends into the river-bed, then climbs out again to cross a ravine, and then runs on to Nilt—the scene of the fight in 1891. Nilt "Fort," now village houses, is just at the end of a shelf of level ground, from which there is a sheer drop of some 300 feet into the river. Behind the fort a deep nullah runs into the mountains behind.

I reached Nilt about noon and rested there till 2 P.M., when I went on to Minnapin, which I reached about 5 P.M. From Secunderabad on, the Indus forms the boundary between the twin, but generally antagonistic, states of Hunza and Nagar, the former being on the right bank of the river.

Along this part of the road are several villages, each in the middle of a few patches of green crops and fruit-trees. The valley here is so narrow and has such steep hills on either side that, except when opposite the mouth of some nullah which forms a

break in this "wall," it is impossible to get a glimpse of Mount Rakapushi, although this peak towers 25,530 feet up into the sky.

Most of these nullahs contain glaciers. The mountain slopes run down to the comparatively flat, cultivated stretches, which vary from three-quarters of a mile in width to a few yards, and at the end of these fields there is invariably a cliff of conglomerate with a drop of 200 feet or so to the river.

I passed several most ingenious little water-mills for grinding corn. The water is led from its parent stream in small viaducts till a sufficient height is obtained, and is then led down a three-sided trough about 8 inches square made by hollowing out a log. The jet of water strikes with considerable force against the blades (set at a slight slant) of a paddle-wheel which has its axle vertical, and causes it to revolve rapidly. Above this wheel is a floor, through which the axle is taken and fixed rigidly to the lower grindstone, which consequently revolves at the same pace as the paddle-wheel. The upper grindstone, which does not revolve, is placed on this. A conical hopper full of grain is fixed over the upper grindstone with its mouth close to a nearly horizontal tray, which leads the grain to a hole in the centre of the upper millstone. This tray is caused to

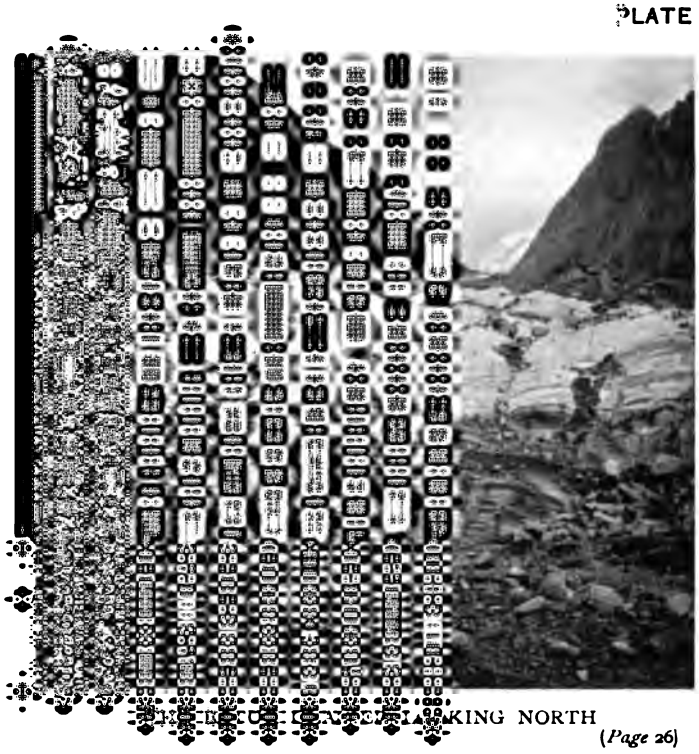
oscillate gently by a piece of wood fixed to it and brought in contact with the upper millstone, and thus the corn is shaken from the tray into the orifice at the rate of perhaps 100 grains a minute.

At Minnapin I used my tent for the first time, having left Chalt and the last dâk bungalow twenty-two miles behind. The flies were a great nuisance, but the air was now cooler.

June 3rd.—Left Minnapin at 7.45 A.M. The road goes down into the river-bed, then up, and then down again to the suspension bridge over the Hunza River which takes one from Nagar into Hunza. This is the last bridge on the road from Kashmir, and the next bridge I came across which had been built under European supervision was that over the Ili River at Ilitsk, in the Russian province of Semirechensk.

The valley at this point shows much more cultivation on the Nagar side of the river than on that belonging to Hunza.

I arrived at Hunza (or Baltit) about 2.30, and called on Major Bruce, the Political Agent, who had come up to Hunza on tour from Gilgit. I also had an interview with the Mir or Rajah and his Wazir Humyan. The Mir brought with him a small son, whose age he said was eleven, but who looked even younger, being dressed in European clothes.



KING NORTH

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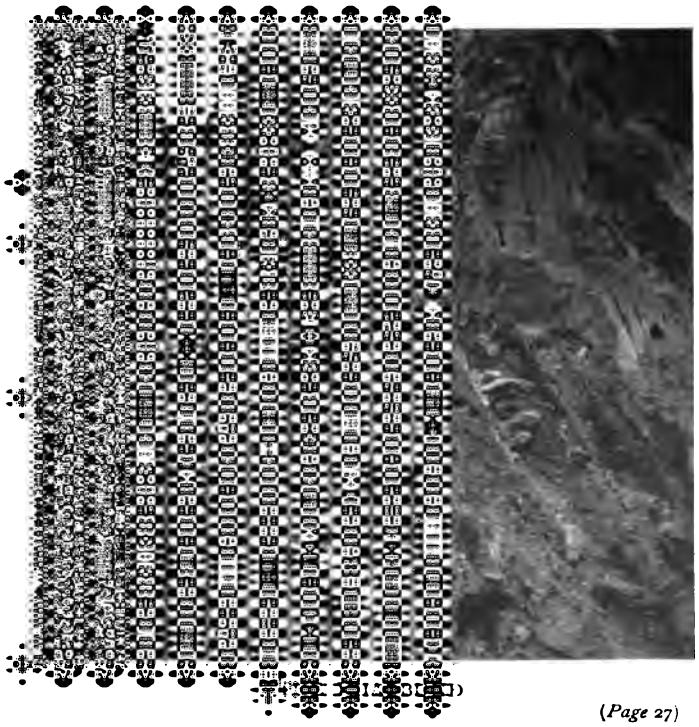

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They were exceedingly obliging, and displayed most highly polished manners.

June 4th.—Having said good-bye to the Bruces and the Mir, I left Hunza at 8 A.M. A pony was sent for me to ride, but as the road from Baltit to Mohammedabad was cut along the face of a cliff, and was only about three feet wide, and very much up and down besides, I preferred to walk. At Mohammedabad a man offered me some khabanis (dried apricots) which I gratefully accepted. The road immediately beyond this village drops into the bed of the stream, the course of which it follows for some two miles. It then goes first 200 feet up, and then 200 feet down the cliff, to avoid a water-washed parri (cliff); and then struggles up to the top of a shoulder about 1000 feet high, only to descend rather less steeply to the camping-ground on the sands of the river-bed below Atabad. This last shoulder must apparently have been formed by a landslip which seems to have at one time blocked up the valley at this point. By this time it was 1 o'clock, and I felt very limp, though all things considered I had had an easy march.

June 5th.—Left Atabad about 8. Our road ran at first along the stony river-bed for about a mile, then ascended some 1000 feet, and from there to Gulmit kept continually ascending and descending

until it finally dropped into the river-bed again. It varied in breadth from three to two feet, but having been recently repaired, was not dangerous to a man on foot: how the two ponies managed to get along it safely, even with two men steadying them by holding on to their tails, I cannot think, but they arrived in camp without accident. We encountered three more of these parris (cliffs) before we reached Gulmit, but the ponies were swum round their bases in the ice-cold stream, instead of being taken over the top. We eventually reached Gulmit about 3.30, having made halts lasting 1½ hours in all. I was quite beat on arrival, and could not eat—I do not know why, as I have often done worse marches without fatigue.

June 6th.—I made a short and easy march along the river-bed among the numerous streams that flow down the Gulmit Glacier to Sasaini village, and then over a shoulder and below the Passu Glacier to that village.

The Passu Glacier ends abruptly in a perpendicular wall of ice some half-mile above the track we followed, and numerous streams flow down the boulder-strewn channel which leads from it to the Hunza River, about a mile and a half away. The Gulmit Glacier extends right down to within a couple of hundred yards or less from the Hunza River, and closely resembles the Passu. The surface of these

glaciers is very rugged, and covered with earth and pebbles brought down from the mountains.

I was again quite done, though I had ridden all the way, and had felt so ill half-way at Sasaini that I had to take a rest of three hours there. Our time on the road was 3¼ hours only.

June 7th.—Rested at Passu, not feeling well enough for the next difficult march to Khaibar.

June 8th.—Ditto. Rain commenced during night and continued steadily all day; clouds low on the hills as they often are in Scotland. As the whole of the mountains in this part of the world seem to have a very unstable surface (here one is almost at the meeting-point of the Karakorum and Hindu Kush ranges), the heavy rain caused a series of land-slides which came thundering down into the valley all day.

June 9th.—Ditto. The rain cleared off during the morning, though it remained cloudy all day. With the .22 I shot a very thin teal, which appeared, apparently from nowhere, on a little pool of rain-water in the village.

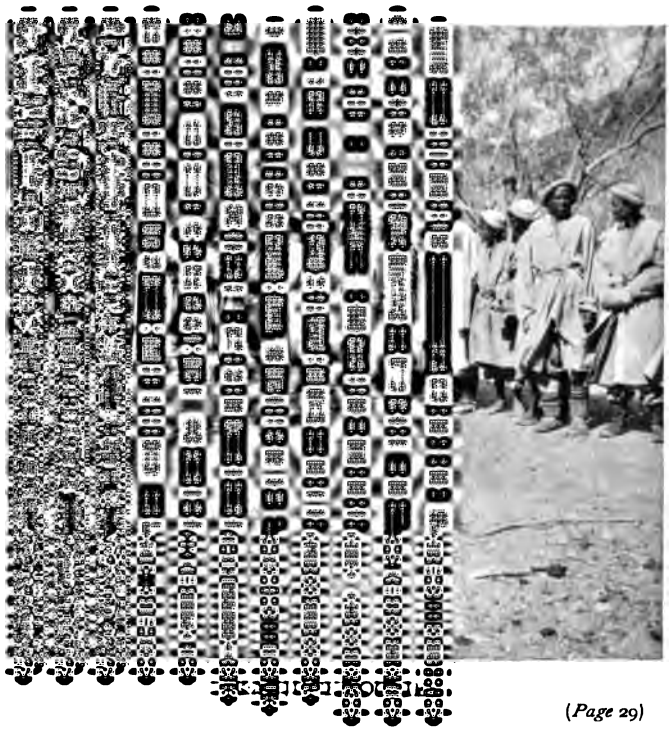
The natives of these parts are called Kanjutis. They seem manly and cheerful fellows, and are unspoiled as yet by so-called "education" and democratic ideas totally unsuited to the East, which foolish European doctrinaires endeavour to introduce. The

Kanjutis have a pretty habit of wearing flowers in their caps. A runner sent from Hunza with a packet of letters from home overtook me here to-day, and I began to feel a little better, being able to take some solid food, instead of milk, which had been all I could swallow since leaving Gulmit on the 5th.

June 10th.—Decidedly better, but spent another day resting. While out for a stroll near camp I saw a blue rock-pigeon dash round the face of the cliff close by me, pursued by a large hawk (a peregrine, I fancy), which caught it in mid-air. The hawk stooped like a flash, and had struck the pigeon before I realised what was happening.

June 11th.—Started about 8 A.M. for Khaibar, and during this day's march passed the entrance to the Shimshal Nullah. Up this nullah, and over the difficult pass at its head, was a favourite route of the Hunza people for their raids across the border before these were stopped by the British after the campaign of 1891. We soon after reached the Batur Glacier, a formidable mass of ice covered in most places with stones and grit, and broken up into many hillocks with occasional deep crevasses between them —a very awkward place to get ponies over, but our lot crossed safely. The road on the north side leaves the glacier by a steep zigzag up a cliff, and then descends again at once to the river, which now

PLATE 7



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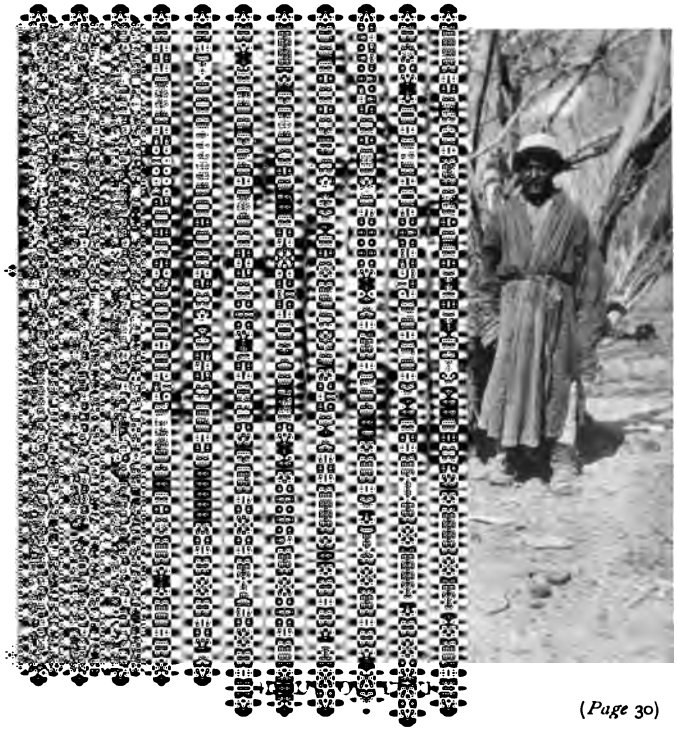

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became comparatively small, and had unusually little water in it. The reason for this, of course, was that in wet and cloudy weather the snow and ice do not melt on the high hills which form the greater part of the "catchment area" of these mountain streams.

We then followed the river towards Khaibar, travelling close to its bed under high conglomerate cliffs. To get to Khaibar the path takes a sudden turn to the left up a nullah with perpendicular banks, and then zigzags up the northern side through a door, called the Dharbund. Khaibar is a small village on a comparatively level piece of ground about two miles in length, the northern exit being through a similar Dharbund to the one I have just described. It must have been a good rallying-point in the old days.

I reached Khaibar at 1.30, had lunch, and went on again at 2.30 to Gircha, which we reached at 5.30 P.M. Most of the way was down the river-bed, but we had one small parri (cliff) to surmount, and then crossed the river by a rickety cantilever bridge to the left bank, while the ponies crossed by a girth-deep ford.

June 12th.—Left Gircha at about 8.45, and reached Misgar (after halting three-quarters of an hour for lunch) at 2.45. This march is supposed to be twelve miles, but as it took us five and a quarter hours'

riding it must be rather more than that. After passing Khudabad we turned to the right, and had to ride up the river-bed, crossing the stream many times. One ford which we crossed to avoid an awkward parri was so deep that I got my up-stream knee wet; although luckily, owing to the cloudy weather, the stream was unusually shallow. About 11.45 we turned off at right angles up the Killik River, and after following it some way climbed laboriously 300 feet or 400 feet out of its gorge on to its right bank, crossed half a mile of open plain, then descended, again crossed the river, and, having climbed an equal height up the left bank, found ourselves in the scattered village of Misgah, some 10,000 feet above sea-level.

June 13th.—We left Misgah at 9 A.M., having waited to let the sun warm us before starting, and reached Mercushi at 3 P.M., after halting an hour on the way. The road runs at first along the Misgah Plateau, then plunges down into the cutting made by the river alongside which the road runs, till at Shikari it emerges into the open valley again. The way is very stony, but not otherwise difficult. At Mercushi there is a triangular patch of willow jungle with a base of half a mile, and sides of a mile, which affords firewood and shelter for one's tent.

I had made arrangements some time before,

through Mr. Macartney and the Chinese authorities, that the Tajiks who inhabit the valley of the Karachukar River should meet me here with a sufficient number of yâks to convey my baggage across the border pass, so accordingly paid off and dismissed the Kanjuti coolies who had formed my transport since leaving Baltit this afternoon.

These men are, as is naturally the case from the nature of the country (Hunza) in which they live, expert mountaineers, and think nothing of carrying a box weighing 50 or 60 lbs. over places which are not altogether simple to the unencumbered European. They seemed to me, unlike natives who come much in contact with white people, to be capital fellows, and quite unspoiled as yet.

As was always my custom in India, I had them formed up in a line, and paid each man his wages into his own hand myself. This is the only way to ensure that coolies are not robbed by one's native servants, and even when this is done the latter often manage to exact something from the coolies. When at Passu some men who did not wish to go further had to be paid off, and I afterwards heard that, as I was too ill to give each man his money myself according to custom, my servants pocketed almost the entire amount.

Owing to my having been delayed on the way

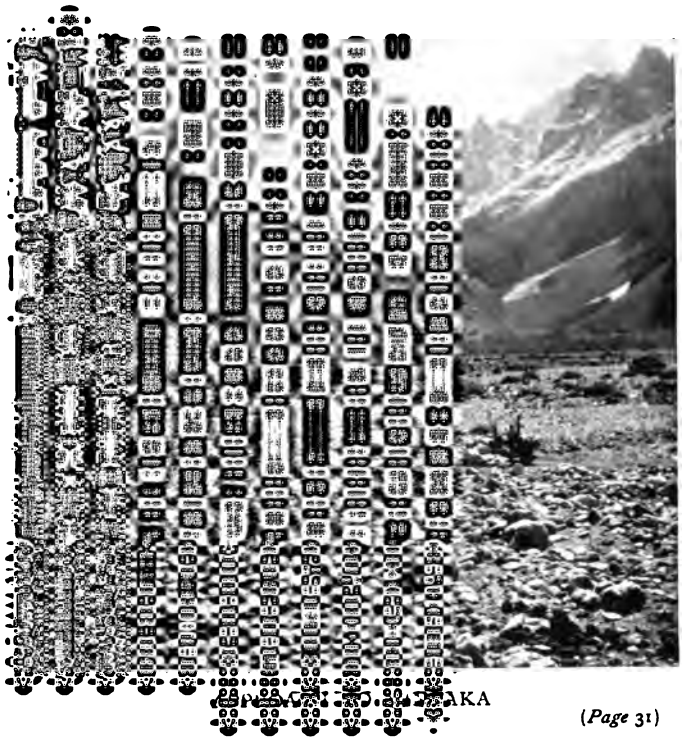
for four days by illness, I did not reach Mercushi until a little later than I had reckoned. The Tajiks, finding I had not arrived at Mercushi on the day arranged, recrossed the border with their yâks, as there is little or no pasture to be obtained on the Indian side, and waited for me at a place called Lop Guz. I sent on warning of my approach to them from Misgah on June 12th, but this had not given them sufficient time to meet me at Mercushi.

I was therefore unable to continue my march next day (June 14th), and amused myself while waiting by firing a few trial shots with my rifles, but unfortunately tried my .350 Mauser-Rigby with the telescopic sight only. My other rifle, a double .360 No. 2 by Gibbs, was an old favourite, and being stocked to fit me like a shot-gun, was the weapon I liked best for shooting in jungle.

The Tajiks and their yâks arrived at my camp about 2 P.M. These men are nomads who live in tents called khourgas, and whose wealth consists in flocks of sheep and herds of yâks. They also own some camels and a few ponies.

Yâks are something like very rough-coated black Highland cattle, but are more heavily built. The hair of their coats is extraordinarily thick, as is necessitated by the climate in which they live, and they have bushy tails.

PLATE 8



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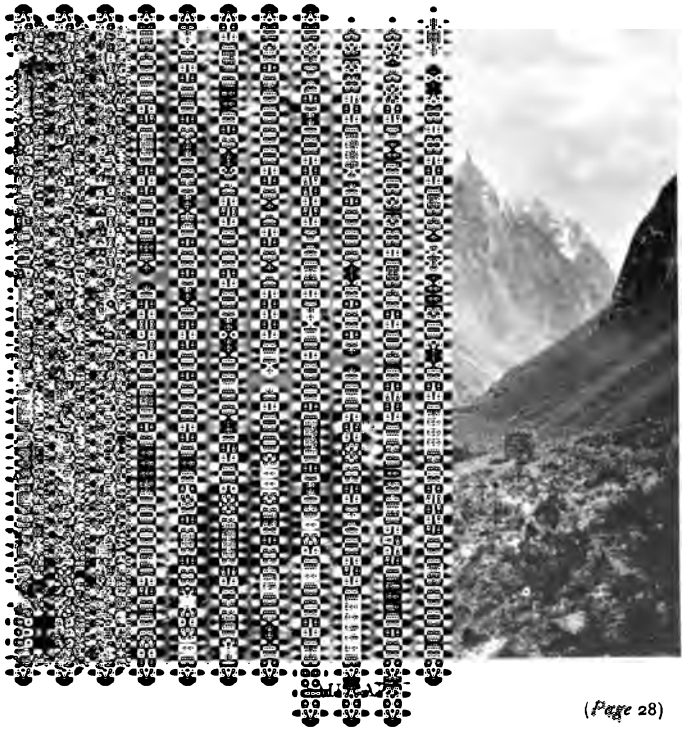

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CHAPTER IV

ONE HUNDRED MILES ON A YÂK

June 15th.—We left Mercushi at 8.45 A.M. Half a mile from camp the valley divides like the upper portion of the letter Y, the right-hand or eastern nullah forming the approach to the Mintaka Pass, while the western portion, which is called the Kushbel Nullah, leads to the Killik Pass. As this latter debouches into the Karachukur Valley almost opposite the mouth of the Kukturuk Nullah, which is one of the best places in the Tugdumbash Pamir for *O. poli*, we chose to cross the Indo-Chinese frontier by this route.

The road was easy though stony, and the valley widens towards its upper end. I saw one or two poli heads lying on the ground as we passed, which shows that they come down into this valley in winter. We only made a short march, and camped about 12.30 at a place called Shirin Maidan, at the foot of the Killik Pass. Our reason for halting so early was that it is always best to cross a pass while the snow is still frozen in the early morning. When the sun

gets high the snow melts, and men and animals then have hard work to flounder through it.

I had my tent pitched opposite the mouth of the little ravine which leads to the Pass. As it was now the middle of summer there was some grass in the valley for the yâks, and plenty of water, but as soon as the sun set everything, of course, froze hard.

As is usual in this part of the world, now that we had nearly reached the watershed, the top of the valley in which we camped was comparatively flat, and there was more grass than we had seen anywhere since leaving Kashmir.

During the afternoon I amused myself by practising with my .22 Winchester automatic rifle, which was most accurate, and made a capital toy. I used to make one of my servants carry it when on the march, and often managed to bag a rock-pigeon or chuckor (hill partridge) with it, and so diversify my not very complicated menu.

In the evening we saw some small *O. poli* higher up the valley. After the sun went down I found it very cold inside my tent, and was glad of my eider-down quilts over me in bed.

June 16th.—After the usual delay in getting the yâks loaded we started off about 8.30. The snow-line was close above camp, but we found both the

ascent and the descent of the Killik quite easy, though the summit of the col is some 15,800 feet above sea-level. There was snow for about five miles, but only about a foot deep.

Our way was up the little ravine behind my tent, up the steep place just over the left-hand edge of the nearest patch of snow shown in the illustration, and round the snow-covered shoulder on the left. The summit of the col forms the limit of the jurisdiction of the Government of India, and the narrow strip of territory which intervenes between it and Russia is administered by China. As, however, the valley of the Karachukur and part of Raskam are still, nominally at least, part of the Mir of Hunza's dominions, the Government of India has, as the Mir's suzerain, a strong claim to the country should they wish to assert it.

The accompanying illustrations are taken from the summit. The first shows the view looking back towards India, while the second faces the opposite way and gives one's first impression of Chinese territory, showing the valley of the Karachukur, which runs from left to right in the photograph. On the left centre is the mouth of the Kukturuk Nullah, while the peaks on the right mark the boundary line between Russia and China.

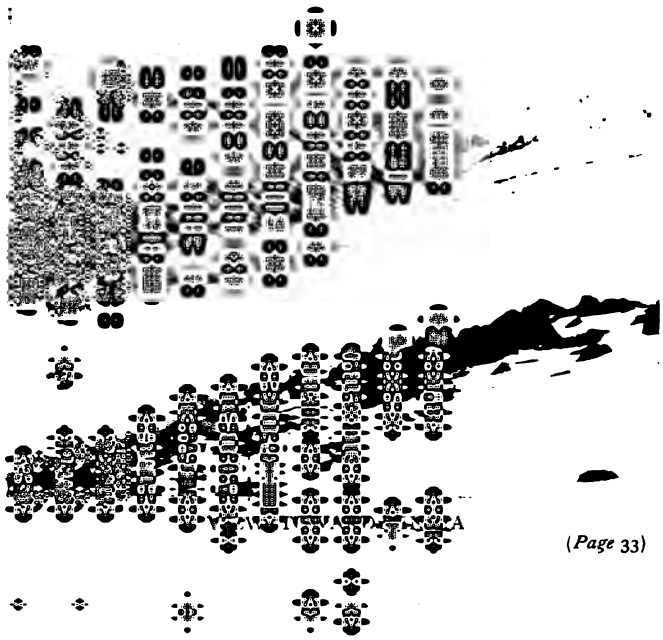
Descending the Killik Pass we emerged into the

Karachukur Valley, here about two miles wide, and camped at about 1 P.M. at the junction of the Kukturuk and Karachukur streams at an elevation of 13,700 feet. This valley (filled at the time of my visit with herds of yâks and flocks of sheep and goats) forms a wedge of Chinese territory driven in between Russia and India, and joins at its western end a similar narrow tongue of Afghanistan. Here three empires meet. The photograph, which is taken looking westwards up to the head of the valley, shows the mountain barrier whose opposite slopes are in Afghanistan, while the slopes on the left lead to the Indian as those on the right do to the Russian boundary.

A native tent (yourt) had been pitched for me, and I found it very comfortable though a little draughty.

A yourt (or khourga, as the people there called them) consists of a hive-shaped framework of sticks, round which are wrapped felt numdahs, commencing at the bottom, till the whole is covered. A hole, which can be closed up at night, is left in the centre of the dome for the smoke to escape by. My khourga (tent) is about 18 feet in diameter and 8 feet high in the centre. The centre of the roof for about 24 inches in diameter is open to the sky in the daytime, and while a fire is burning inside; but at night, when the fire is put out, it is covered up.

PLATE 9



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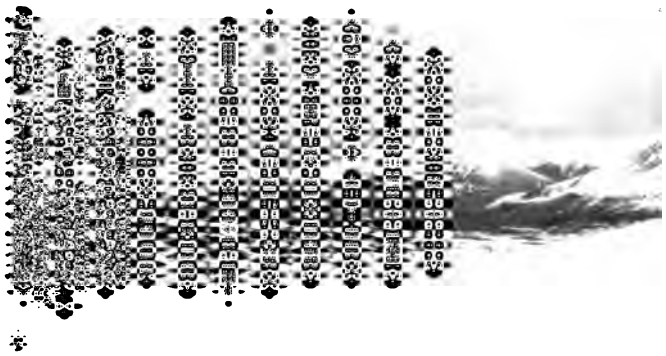

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It makes quite a comfortable roomy dwelling-place, and is much warmer than an ordinary tent. The floor is covered with numdahs, and on one side there is a door about 5 feet high, closed by a sort of flap of felt hung over it on the outside. My illustration shows a collection of firewood outside the servants' tent.

Here I paid off my Kanjuti guide, Goher, who had been sent by the Mir of Hunza to look after me while in Hunza territory, and who had been quite useful.

June 17th.—I started for my first day's shooting, and leaving camp at 5 A.M., we went up the Kukturuk Nullah and reached a shoulder at which it divides into two branches, in about four hours. We all (*i.e.* myself, Abdul, and two local shikaries) rode yâks, as in these altitudes walking is such a severe exertion that, exasperatingly slow as a yâk is, no one will walk for choice. A yâk's bridle consists of a single rope which is passed through his nostrils; so when I wanted to turn my mount I had to throw my rope over his horns towards the side to which I wanted to go, and then pull his head round.

It was dreadfully cold until sunrise, but during the day, if one could get shelter from the wind, the sun felt quite hot.

There were some *O. poli* in the eastern branch of the nullah, but the wind was wrong, and as there was no way round we could not try for them.

We therefore moved on a little way and spied the western nullah, and at 10.45 my Tajik shikari made out two poli with fair heads. They lay down, however, in an unapproachable position, and there remained till 1 P.M., when they got up and began to feed. We at once started our stalk up the little stream at the bottom of the nullah, and were just getting nicely into position when a marmot gave the alarm.

These marmots were a perfect nuisance, for they had holes everywhere, and there was no evading them. When a marmot sees a man, even 400 or 500 yards away, he sits up at the edge of his burrow and whistles loudly. The poli know what this means, and are on the alert at once. This time we got to the edge of the bank in time to see the poli standing up just ready to bolt. I was unsteadied by the slight exertion of climbing, but when about 250 yards away the leading poli stopped to look round, and though I missed my first shot I managed to hit him with the second and third. The rest of the herd made off up the steep mountain side, though they could only travel slowly through the snow. I hurried on to get another shot, but was so blown by my efforts that when I got within range I could not shoot.

The dead ram, measured on the spot, was 53 inches, but by the time he reached home he

was only measured at 51½ inches by Rowland Ward. All horns shrink a little as they dry, but I fancy my tape had shrunk a little also, and so measured heads too big. This is, of course, not a good head, but many sportsmen with as little time as I could afford in the Tagdumbash have had to be content with even less. The natives are nowadays much on what used to be the poli ground, and shoot a good many for meat, the result being that the best heads are on the Russian side, where no Englishman is allowed to go.

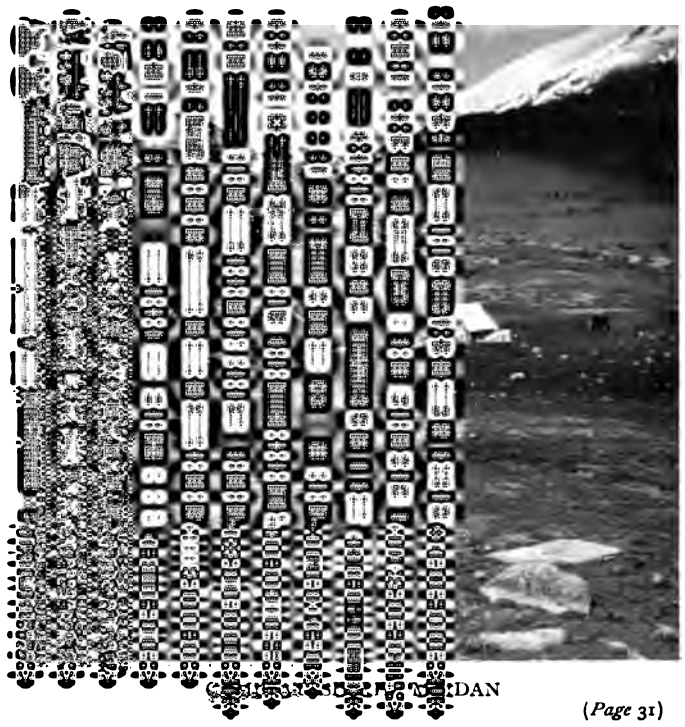
We got back to camp at 7.15 P.M., after a rather wearying march. We passed some camels feeding by the stream on our way (I did not know that they could live so high up). They had some very ragged jhools (rugs) fastened over them, which I mistook in the distance for shaggy hair. These camels have two humps, and look a good deal stronger animals than those one is accustomed to see in India.

I had started out clad in vest, cummerbund, thick flannel shirt, Shetland woolly, leather waistcoat, thick puttoo Norfolk suit, woollen comforter, and Peshawari poshteen, and yet was quite cold till sunrise. I was by no means pleased with the stalk, which was spoiled by the marmots, nor with my shooting; still the chance was not an easy one. Rifle, .350, Mauser-Rigby.

June 18*th*.—Went out again to look for the poli left in the eastern nullah, but they had disappeared, and all we saw were the lot I fired at yesterday. These were high up in the snow, looking very miserable. A yâk is not unpleasant to ride, but very slow, and he keeps on grinding his teeth in a way which sets one's own on edge. The native saddles have a high peak in front, and are rather short in the seat. The peak is a very necessary thing, as, a yâk having no shoulders, one would be apt without it to slide off over his head when going down-hill. The entire nullah is strewn with old horns and skulls of poli, some perhaps having lain there for ten or fifteen years: they mostly measure about 50 inches, and all seem to be those of males.

June 19*th*.—Went up Balderling Nullah, which is behind the camp, spied a herd of poli towards the top of the nullah, and stalked them up the stream. The marmots again whistled at us, and made the poli suspicious, and I only got a long shot at 300 yards. My quarry proved only a small head, 43 inches, and therefore was a disappointment. I got back to camp at 11 A.M. A native I had sent to spy in Kukturuk reported that he had seen some good heads in a side nullah. Minimum temperature, 16° F.

June 20*th*.—Minimum temperature inside yourt,



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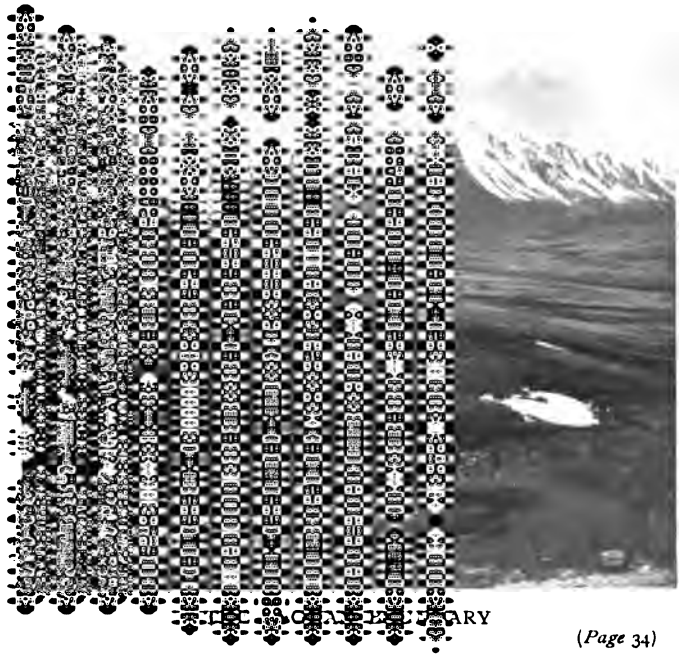

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33° F. Started at 5.30 A.M., and again investigated Kukturuk Nullah, but though we saw a good many poli there were none worth shooting. On the way back we came on a stonechat's or lark's nest, and a ram-chuckor's nest, at an elevation of well over 15,000 feet; the latter contained six eggs (which we took), about the same size as English hens' eggs. A snowstorm came on, but fortunately it was at our backs. Poli in this nullah are very shy, and if they get the wind of a man are off at once. As they are not only very keen-sighted animals, but are also well acquainted with the meaning of the marmots' alarm whistle, it is a difficult matter to stalk them successfully at this time of year. Later on in the season, when the marmots have gone underground for their winter sleep, no doubt it would be much easier to get within shot. Their weakness is, however, that when alarmed they do not, as a rule, gallop off at once, as a sharpoo does, but run a little way and then stop to look back: therefore, *once one gets within range*, they are not difficult to shoot.

June 21st.—Minimum temperature in open, 22° F. Left camp at 8.45, after the usual delay in getting the yâks loaded. The road, which is here extremely easy, follows the course of the Karachukur down to Mintaka-Aksai, where we arrived about 4.30,

and found two khourgas ready for us. On the way I lunched in a khourga, and was most comfortable with my back against some pillows and my feet against a mud stove. I tried some yâk's milk curds, which form the Tajiks' principal food, but didn't like them much. Some cream made from ewe's milk was, however, excellent. On leaving, I watched a woman milking a ewe which was being held for her by a boy. These Tajiks, instead of moving to lower ground during the winter, as one would expect, ascend higher into the mountains to places swept bare of snow by the wind, where they can pasture their flocks. They have become much wealthier, and have penetrated much further into the Tagdumbash, since the Indian Government put an end to the Hunza raids. A snowstorm came on about 1.30, and continued at intervals till about 4 P.M. Altitude of Mintaka-Aksai, 13,000 feet.

June 23rd.—Minimum temperature, 12° F. Started at 8.15 A.M., and reached Beyik or Sadir Tash (12,550 feet) at 12.45 P.M., the baggage yâks taking an hour longer. The valley now closes to about half a mile in width, and the hills on either side get steeper; the valley also gets more stony and there is less pasture. The people at Sadir Tash are not Tajiks but Kirghiz, and their women wear a peculiar high, white turban head-dress. The milk and cream are excellent, but

as the people wear hairy clothes, and the hairy sheep and yâks are now changing their coats, even one's food is sometimes inconveniently hairy. On arrival in camp I was given tea by the Kirghiz. As it was served in a teacup, I asked where the cup came from, and was told "India." I looked at the bottom and beheld the legend, "Made in Germany." Free Trade is a sort of fetish to many people, and may have been an admirable one fifty years ago, but it seems very stupid to retain it now, when it helps the foreigner to undersell us.

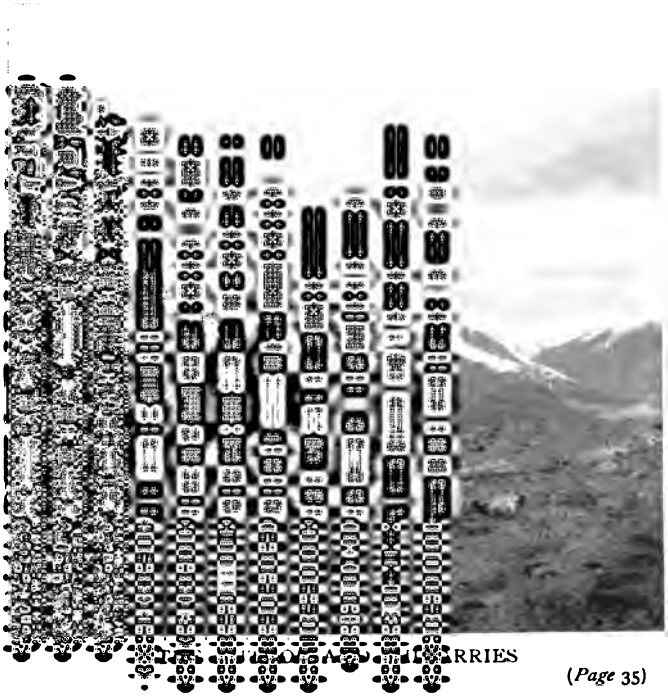
Went up Beyik Nullah. The baggage took 5½ hours to reach camp, just opposite the Beyik Pass at an altitude of 14,000 feet. Two khourgas (sent up here from Sadir Tash) took about an hour each to pitch and about the same time to pack, and each makes about two yâk loads. Temperature of the inside of my khourga was 35° at 7 P.M., so I had a fire lit, which warmed things up at once. My Kirghiz made the fire in a most ingenious way by building a sort of circular wall of dry dung, leaving an air space between each "brick." Yesterday I saw a man wearing some brass buttons, and on looking closely I found they were marked "Wiltshire Regiment." It is extraordinary to what remote places cast-off uniforms, overcoats, &c., seem to find their way.

June 24th.—Went up the nullah at 6 A.M., and

an hour later about three miles up spied two nice poli. They were, however, very wary, and for three hours I did not get a chance; at 10 A.M. they moved, and I went after them, but they kept moving. I might have had a long shot at them but refrained, as the distance was great and my position uncomfortable. They moved off up the hill, and we went home and left them, hoping to get a better chance to-morrow.

A dâk arrived this afternoon with letters from home dated 15th May; they were addressed "c/o Postmaster, Yarkand." There is no such person in Chinese Turkestan, but there is a post from India to Mr. Macartney in Kashgar arranged by the Indian Government. In summer this post runs daily as far as Gilgit, three days a week from Gilgit to Hunza, and three times a month from Hunza *viâ* Tashkurgan to Kashgar. Mr. Macartney in Kashgar can also forward letters *viâ* Russia to the Russian Consul at Kulja, but they take six weeks between these two places. There is also a trans-Asiatic telegraph line from Kashgar *viâ* Aksu to Pekin. The Chinese telegraph clerks send their messages in English, as the Chinese letters (two thousand or more) cannot be translated into the Morse code, except by using a sort of cipher.

I put my minimum thermometer outside my



RRIES

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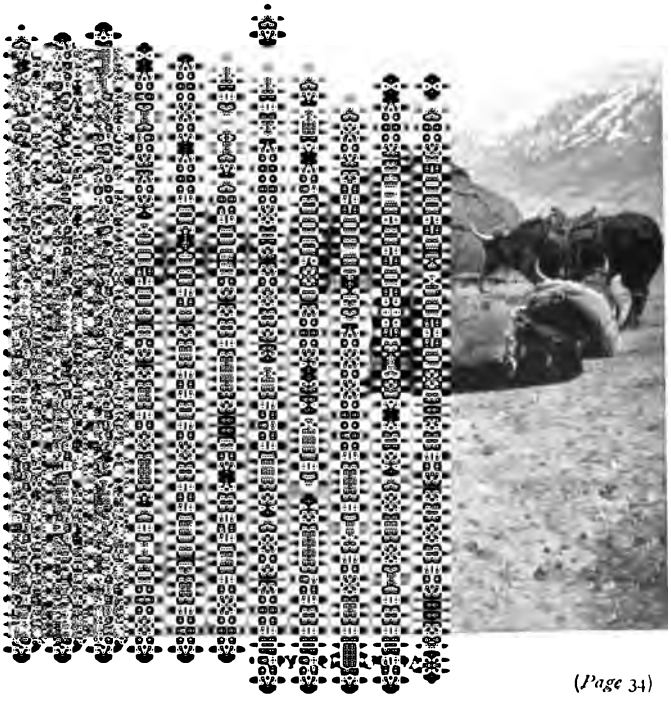

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khourga last night, but a passing Kirghiz stepped on it and broke it.

June 25th.—Started at 5.30. Spied a herd of poli about 7 o'clock. We spent eight hours trying to get at them, but the marmots again spoiled the stalk. On the way home I spied these poli high up in the snow in a narrow nullah, and climbed up the next nullah to the shoulder above them over a mass of loose stones (altitude perhaps 16,000 feet), which I reached ultimately by hanging on to the tail of a yâk, and making him haul me up the slope. I sent Abdul to move the poli to me, but I think he shirked the labour of the climb, for he only moved them a little higher up, and not across to my spur as I wished: so I had to leave them and come down, and when I reached camp at 9.30 P.M. I was dead beat, and could do nothing but drink some soup and roll into bed. On lower ground this would not have been a very hard day's work, but at these high altitudes climbing is a severe exertion.

June 26th.—Was out again all day till 8.15 P.M. I got a shot, and killed my beast at over 300 yards, but owing to my not understanding the shikari, I shot the wrong one, and he turned out so small that I did not bring him in. A great disappointment after all my hard work! My bullet hit him about 4 inches in front of the tail, sideways on; he went

about 200 yards, but was stone dead when I got up; the loss of blood and shock killed him, I suppose, for I did not hit him in a vital spot.

June 27th.—Stayed in camp and sent out shikaris to report. Had a bath in front of a fire. It snowed most of the day. Yesterday I got a "lovely black eye," caused by the telescopic sight of my .350 rifle hitting me when the rifle recoiled, the stock being a little too short for me.

June 28th.—Snow delayed our start till 9 A.M. Spied a herd of poli on a moraine nearly at the far end of the nullah. I climbed the moraine, which, though only about 150 feet high, was formed of loose stones. I could hardly move for want of breath, and reached the top only to find the poli had descended to its foot. But after a little they began to feed, and came past me. I shot the one I thought the largest, and then the next best as they bolted. I descended in great glee, in the belief that I had got two good ones at last, but to my horror on measuring them found the best was 46½ inches and the other under 40 inches. I cannot judge poli horns, I'm afraid, and my jungli shikari is worse than myself in this respect. I would much rather not have shot these poor beasts. However, I have not wounded any.

I find the Mauser-Rigby bolt-head will sometimes engage with the head of a fresh cartridge before the

fired case has been ejected. Then, when the bolt is closed, both are pushed forward towards the chamber and jam. I have twice had a jam from this cause.

I had scalding hot tea seven hours from camp—an advertisement for "Thermos" bottles.

June 29th.—Marched back to Sadir Tash in four and a half hours. Did not start till 11, as a snow-storm which had come on during the night was still in progress. While packing the khourgas two of my Kirghiz lost their temper with one another, and used language which, though I didn't understand a word of it, seemed admirably to express my feelings at having to give up my chance of the big poli.

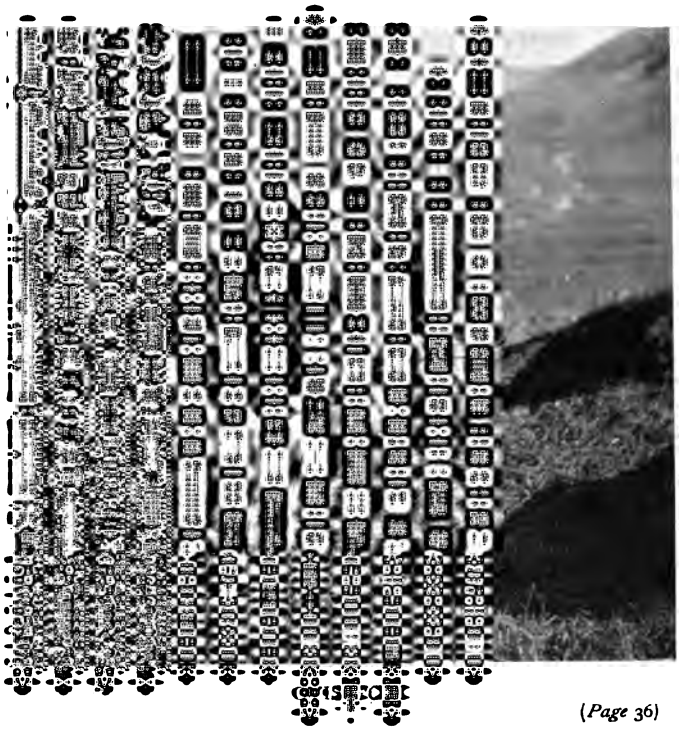
At Sadir Tash a flock of kids were most anxious to come into my khourga, out of the rain; in fact, they got in once when I wasn't looking, and were only ejected just in time; luckily only about half the floor was carpeted.

June 30th.—Left Beyik (or Sadir Tash) at 9.20, and reached Daftar (11,700 feet) at 3.45, having halted forty-five minutes; the baggage arrived 5 P.M. Road easy except first three miles. Here is the only cultivation (barley) I have seen since Misgah. Yâks cannot be used below this place, as the country is not cold enough for them. Paid off all Beyik people this evening—Rs. 136 since 23rd.

July 1st.—Marched at 8.45, and reached Gumbaz (11,100 feet) at 12.15; the baggage arrived at 1.45.

A dull, depressing day, with north wind. It began to rain in the afternoon, and the rain got heavier towards evening. The khourga is much less "waterproof" than a good tent when it rains. Pamirs in wet weather a most depressing spot.

PLATE 12



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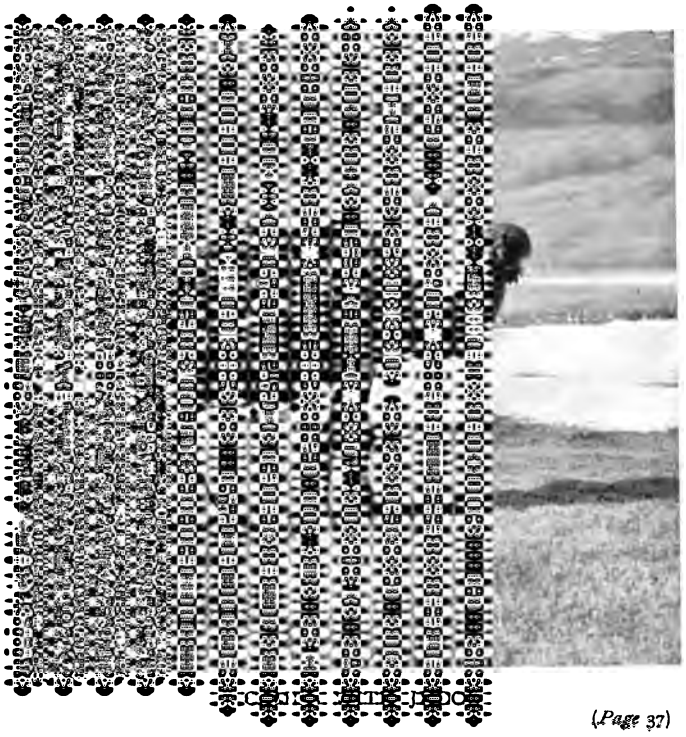

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CHAPTER V

A ROUGH COUNTRY

July 2nd.—Marched at 9.45, arrived at Tashkurgan (10,280 feet) at 3.45, having halted half-an-hour for lunch; the baggage arrived at 5.30 P.M.

It was raining on the hills on both sides of us during most of the march, but we only got some sleet (with a cutting wind) during the last mile. The last six miles of the road were covered with stones as big as hens' eggs, and as my pony was unshod, and very tender on his feet, it was rather a pilgrimage to ride him. It is curious that ponies which never have been shod should get so sore.

Just before reaching Tashkurgan we passed some donkeys carrying loads of bourtsa, which was being collected as a store of fuel for the winter use of the little Russian post here.

Bourtsa is a sort of bush something like heather, and forms the only kind of fuel obtainable in this district: as may be imagined, it takes a good deal of this sort of stuff to make a good fire.

I took up my quarters in Tashkurgan in a little

serai which boasted four rooms; and a courtyard in which are situated the servants' rooms and kitchen.

The bazaar is a very small one, and is dominated by a Chinese fort on the ridge over it. The Russian barracks are about 400 yards away, and also on the ridge. Here are a few small trees, perhaps 15 feet high, the first I have seen since leaving Mercushi.

I got a little peevish with Habiballah the other day. We had done about three-quarters of our march, and could see for some miles in front, so I asked him whereabouts camp would be. He replied, like the owl he is, "In front." I felt as if I could have slain him on the spot with the greatest pleasure.

July 3rd.—Spent the day in paying visits of ceremony. First, I went to see the local Amban, who received me with a salute of three fireworks, which made me jump, as they were fired from a hole in the ground just behind me as I entered his quarters. He talked in a very loud voice, and through three interpreters, the bluster being intended, I suppose, to show how important a man he was. He paid me a return visit at the serai.

I then went to see the Russian officer, who was most polite, but insisted on entertaining me with many and various drinks. Some of them were quite good, but their net result was rather trying to my

inside. He also, with his wife, came to tea with me, and stayed two hours and a half, that is, till 8.30 (my usual dinner hour is 7 o'clock), tasting the Crème de Menthe and Kümmel which I carried for visitors. Unfortunately for me, he much preferred my whisky to these liqueurs, and as three bottles were all I had for my own drinking for the next five months this preference was rather embarrassing.

I fear that I shall have to pay and receive a similar round of visits at each of the principal towns I pass through.

July 4th.—Started from Tashkurgan at 10 A.M., and reached our camping-place, about a mile from the entrance of Dashkot Nullah (12,000 feet) at 2 o'clock. The baggage, which had started half-an-hour before me, did not come in till 3.30.

Habiballah again played Mrs. Malaprop, talking of a *jhool* (horse-rug), meaning *jheel* (pool or snipe-marsh), and consequently conveying to me the valuable information that he knew of a horse-rug which swarmed with duck in November!

Our road quitted the Tashkurgan River, which flows through a gorge to the east, about half-way between this camp and Tashkurgan, and with it we left behind the grass and cultivation. From the river we went up a nullah with a gentle ascent to a

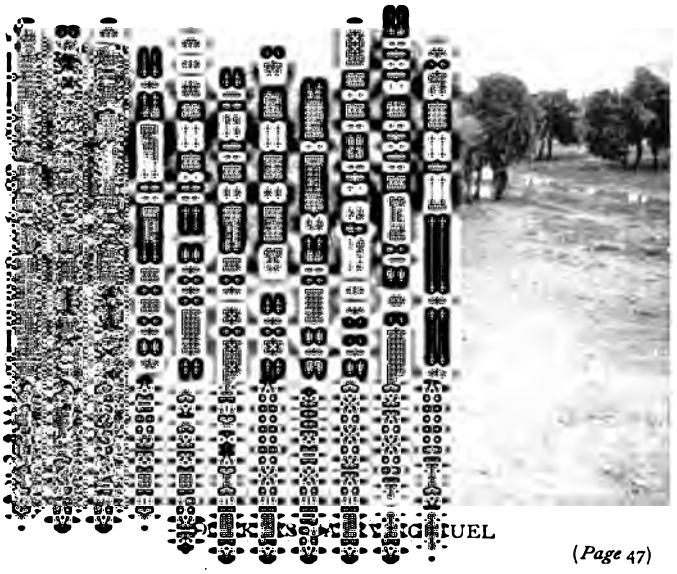
plateau, on to which this nullah opens about a mile below camp.

By the river-side, soon after we started, I saw a man who had caught two fish rather like trout, but not spotted, and with a feeler like a barbel at each corner of their mouths. I bought them from him for a tonga (2½d. to 3d.), and had one for dinner. It made a welcome change in my usual *menu* of soup, mutton, and rice pudding.

July 5th.—Left Dashkot at 9 A.M., and reached Tarbashi (11,650 feet) at 3 P.M., the baggage arriving, as usual, two hours later. The first part of the road was up a narrow stony nullah, which, however, as is often the case, improved as we ascended. We reached the summit of Kok Mainak Pass (15,635 feet) at 11 A.M., and, passing over, descended till we came to a circular valley, about two and a half miles across, and some 14,500 feet above sea-level, at noon.

Here was a herd of thirty yâks grazing (yâk beef for the market in Yarkand, where, I am told, it sells for 2s. per lb.).

We grazed our ponies here for half-an-hour, and then went on, ascending out of this valley over the Chichiklik Pass up quite a gentle slope, rising only about 200 feet. The first part of the descent to Tarbashi was over three miles of melting snow. Tarbashi is in a narrow nullah similar to Dashkot.



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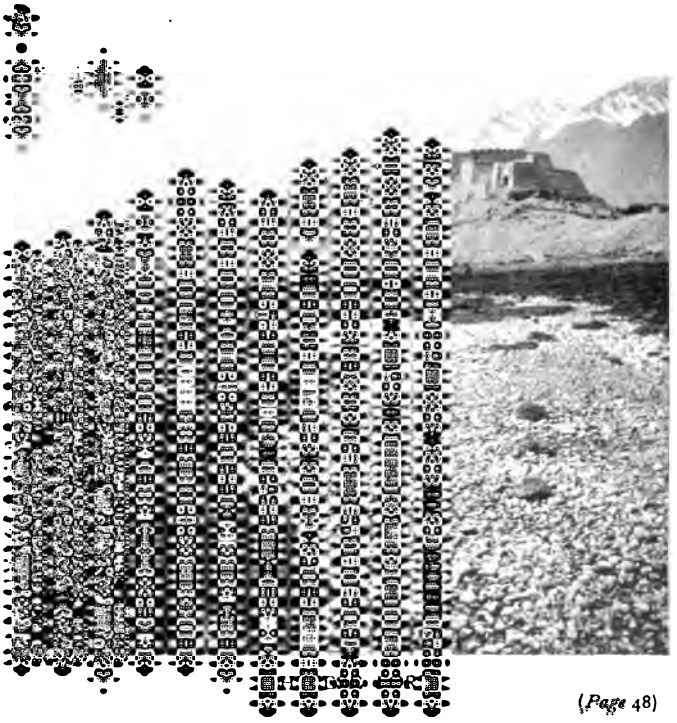


(*Page* 48)

On the eastern slope of the mountains there is much more snow, and below it much better grazing than on the western slope.

Before starting I was much annoyed by the receipt of a letter from the Amban, saying that the Tagdumbash people, having waited till I had gone, had petitioned him, saying that I had not settled for certain things. Having paid amply for everything (Rs. 330) between Mercushi and Tashkurgan, I replied that they were very greedy, and that I was not going to pay another pice. If the Amban squeezes a few rupees out of them into his own pocket I shall not be very sorry.

July 6th.—Left Tarbashi at 9.15, and arrived at Toll Balung at 2 P.M., having taken three-quarters of an hour for lunch on the way. Altitude, 9550 feet. Distance, 12 miles. At starting I was rather amused at the process of girthing up a yâk. A rope is passed round the unfortunate beast, two men seize the opposite ends, each man places one foot against the yâk's side, and pulls the rope as tight as he can; it is then fastened with a knot.

After the first three miles the valley suddenly closed in. We had to descend a steep track beside a waterfall into a regular gorge, the precipitous rocky walls of which, generally only a few yards and in one place well under 20 feet apart, rose sheer from

the bed of the torrent. This torrent is called the Tangitar River, and for the next three miles we had to wade down it among the rocks and boulders of its bed. Now and then some one would fall off a rock into a pool, while endeavouring to help the baggage animals, but the water, though cold, was not very deep, and the sun being warm, no one minded very much.

The yâks made no mistakes, but one or two ponies we had with us came down more than once.

The worst of yâks as baggage animals is that, besides being very slow, they like to travel in a little herd. Consequently one is always miscalculating his distance and knocking his load against that of his neighbour. No damage ensues to the yâk, but the boxes he is carrying suffer.

After marching down this gorge for about two hours we came to a place where the valley opened out a little.

Here, for the first time since leaving Hunza, I found some bushes and wild roses (not yet in bloom), and a little further on saw a few willows. There were also some patches of barley, but their owners were away, up in the higher valleys grazing their flocks. At Toll Balung are several permanent houses and a good deal of cultivation, and also

several curious mud tombs. These latter are, I was told, the last resting-places of Hadjis. A Hadji is a man who has successfully made the great pilgrimage to Mecca. These Hadjis pass through Kashmir on their way to Karachi. They must endure great hardships for their faith, and often they arrive back in India with no money left to help them on their return journey. Most of them, however, now go *viâ* the Russian railway, which is much more easily reached than the Indian.

I went out at 4.30 P.M. to see if I could find anything to shoot for the pot, and managed to annex a couple of pigeons and a chuckor; I also found some chuckor's eggs—all welcome additions to my larder.

This morning, before starting, a runner overtook me; he brought some letters—posted on from France, May 30—but no newspapers.

July 7th.—Left Toll Balung at 9.30, and reached the top of Ter Art Pass in two and a half hours, the baggage yâks taking three hours. This track is fairly steep, but one can ride all the way. At the top of the Pass (13,200 feet), the road is between some rocks, which form a passage only three or four feet wide. I had lunch at Chahil Gumboz, about four miles on (10,700 feet), where I changed my baggage animals. I saw here some ordinary

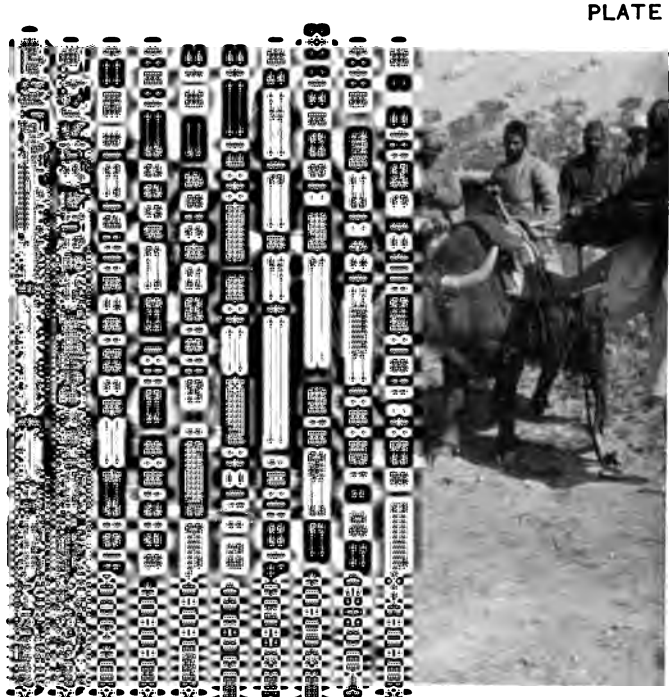
black and red cattle—the first I had seen for weeks. We then went about six miles further on, and camped at Tash Ulak (9500 feet), after a journey of about sixteen miles in all. On the way I saw two chuckor, and got within about thirty feet; I shot one with the .22, the other flew away, but lit again on the steep hillside 100 yards off. I had a second shot and missed, but the third, to my surprise, caught it full and killed it.

The people here, and in fact all the way from Hunza to Illi, when their yâks or ponies have come to the end of a day's march, do not at once off-saddle them and turn them loose to graze, but keep them tied up for a couple of hours or more. They say that if the animals are let loose at once their legs fill and they get sore backs, and they eat little and rest all night; whereas, if tied up and made to rest first, they graze all night and eat their fill.

The Tajiks and Kirghiz wear a sort of leather blucher boot cut low behind at the calf. Over the foot of this boot they wear a kind of slipper like a "golosh," and inside it they use stockings made of thick felt.

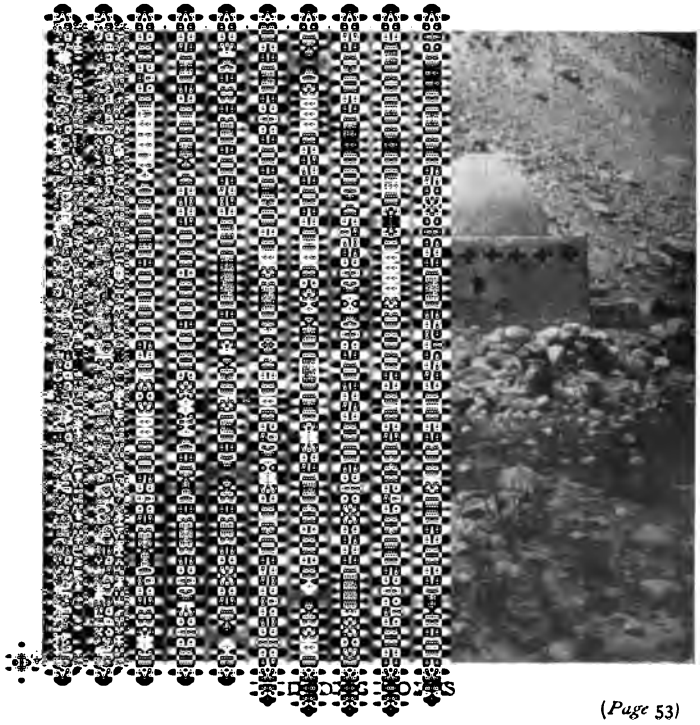
July 8th.—Marched from Tash Ulak at 8.40, and reached Bagh (7250 feet) at 3.30 P.M., having halted three-quarters of an hour. Distance about 22 miles. The road is down hill all the way, but crosses from

PLATE 14



YAK

(*Page* 51)



(*Page* 53)

one side of the river to the other continually. There is a good deal of cultivation, and about half-way we began to see trees, willows, poplars, and apricots. To-day also we renewed acquaintance with the common house-fly, a welcome absentee since leaving Passu. We saw a lot of chuckor, and I shot four for the pot with the .22, though one of them which I had only wounded gave me a fine run before I could catch it.

My lodging this night was a Chinese rest-house. I occupied an inner room lighted by a hole in the roof. The said roof is flat, and consists of boards with a thin layer of earth over them, and as no provision is made for water to run off it leaks like a sieve in wet weather.

The people here are more settled, and live in houses, and use wood as fuel instead of yâk-dung and bourtsa. I tried to shave yesterday, but my skin was still tender from the effects of the glare off the snow on the Chichiklik Pass, and the attempt was a distinct failure.

July 9th.—Marched at 9 A.M. down the Cheirton Valley, but after some eight miles the road took a sharp turn to the left, and led up a side nullah. This nullah for three miles was very bare and stony, and then gradually began to show signs of cultivation. At 12.45 a thunderstorm came on, so I

took shelter in a neighbouring hovel which had a tiny door, and was so low that I could not stand upright. It was lighted by openings in the roof through which the rain poured.

In about an hour, when the rain had stopped, we started again. We crossed the stream, which I noticed was a pale mud colour, but had only gone a few yards when my servant called my attention to it again—it had suddenly become almost black, the water from the upper part of the valley having come down.

Soon afterwards I found my baggage drawn up in front of Teksikerik Serai, and discovered to my intense annoyance that the change of ponies ordered here was not ready. As the next halting-place was fifteen miles on, over two passes, and my ponies were tired, I had to halt. The serai was a very dirty one, so I pitched my tent instead of using it. We had now reached an elevation of 7100 feet, having marched fourteen miles in four and a half hours. The baggage came in thirty minutes later, as usual.

July 10th.—Started 9 A.M. After going up the main valley for about a mile, the road turns up a side nullah to the right (N.E.). The bottom of this nullah is composed of fine shale, washed down from higher up the mountain. It is nearly flat, and quite easy going until suddenly, about three-quarters of a

mile from where we entered it, we found ourselves face to face with a precipice, perhaps 100 feet high, over which the stream poured, making a fine waterfall.

To avoid this precipice we had to climb a steep and slippery track up the side of the hill to our left. Our Kirghiz considered this such bad going that they off-loaded all the ponies, and carried the loads up on their own backs. It was not really dangerous, though in some places very slippery, and I am sure the Hunza people would have ridden up it without thinking twice.

As it takes time to unload, and load the ponies up again, this place delayed us nearly an hour.

The going now was easy till the last mile of the Kara-Dawan (or Black Pass), which was steep (9400 feet). The road then descended for about 450 feet, and then ascended again to the Kizil-Dawan (Red Pass). The rise to this Pass (10,350 feet) is very gentle, and after crossing it we descended the valley to Arpalik, where we made our camp at 9300 feet. The baggage took six and three-quarter hours for this march of about nineteen miles. A drizzling rain fell at intervals all day. The Kizil-Dawan is so called from the red sandstone hills in its vicinity.

I paid off my ponies here, as a fresh lot had arrived, using Russian money for the first time.

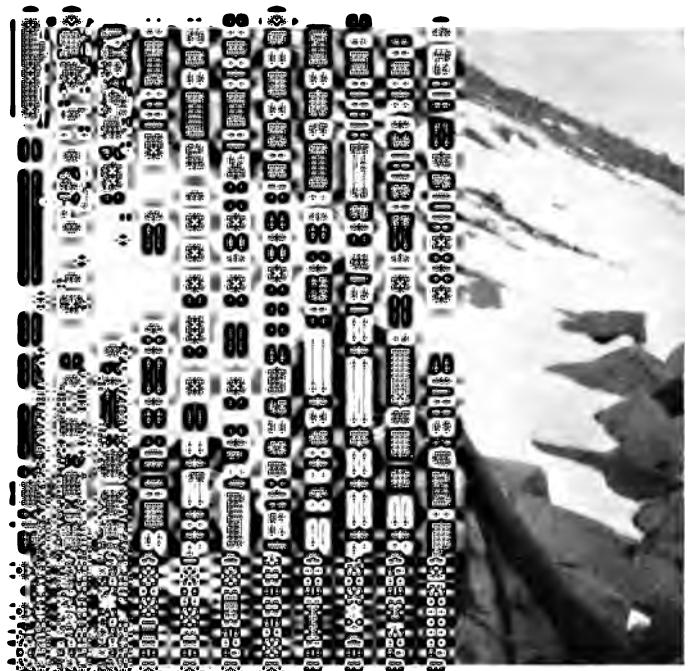
1 rouble = 1½ rupees or 2 shillings. Money is reckoned by Chinese tongas. A tonga = 2 annas 8 pies or 2¾d. nearly, and 6 tongas = 1 rupee.

A pony's hire is 6 tongas a march of fifteen to twenty miles; the rate in Kashmir (except in the Gilgit Agency) is about half this amount for ponies, which do not, however, carry quite as heavy loads. I had with me fourteen baggage ponies and five riding ponies (self and four servants), or nineteen in all. The local officer, or Beg, used to accompany me through his district to see that I got the ponies and supplies I wanted, and I used to pay for his services at the rate of 2 or 3 rupees a day.

July 11th.—Marched at 9.30 A.M. Some of the pony-men decamped during the night, taking eight ponies, but with some difficulty we collected six others to replace them. Three miles on the Arpalik River enters a narrow gorge six miles long, then the valley widens—but still remains bounded by precipitous hills, some 500 feet to 1000 feet above its level, and formed of red sandstone instead of dark rock as in the gorge above.

At 4.45 P.M., having gone about eighteen miles, I had to stop and camp, because the river, which for some miles had been dwindling, here finally disappears into its bed altogether, and even so the water is rather brackish. Report says that no more

PLATE 15



ITUDES

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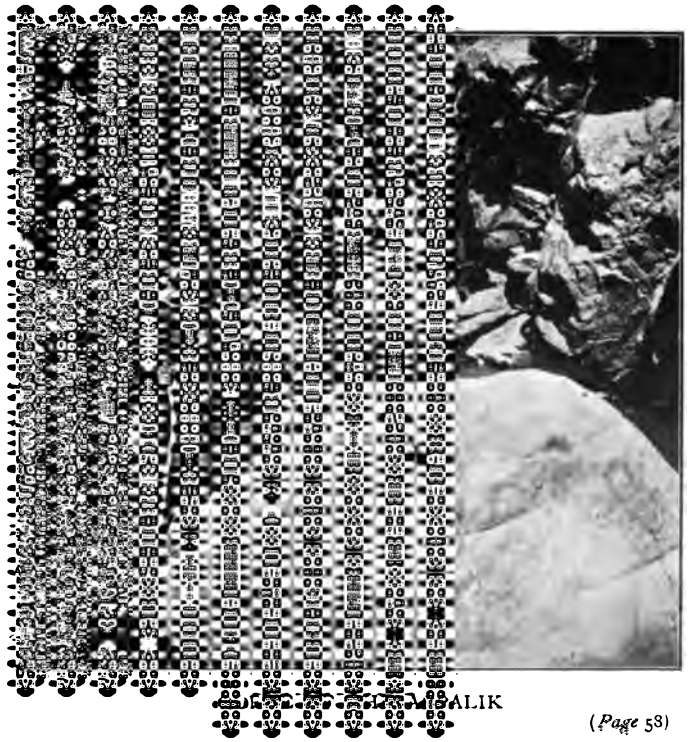


ALIK

(*Page* 58)

water is procurable for twenty miles. There is practically no cultivation and but little grazing along this road, and we only passed two inhabited houses all day.

In spite of the disappearance of the water, this narrow valley (6800 feet), walled in by high sandstone cliffs on both sides, and which the river-bed entirely fills, apparently goes on a long distance into the desert, and as it appears to have been cut by the action of water, a large stream must at some remote period have flowed here.

July 12th.—Started at 6.30. For six miles the road follows the bed of the Arpalik (there are some tiny pools evidently supplied with water by the stream percolating underground at this point), and then, leaving the river, we cross what is marked on my map as the Tupa Osh Pass, though as the lowest point of the road is 6050 feet and the top of the Pass is 6300 feet, the rise is not formidable.

I saw here a gazelle, and spent an hour and a half on a fruitless stalk, but as he was very wary, and would not stay near any place that gave cover, I did not get a shot at him.

On the east side of the Pass are a succession of miniature mud mountains for two miles, and then a dry, shallow nullah for four miles. The road finally climbs the right bank of this nullah, and from its

top, but separated from it by the Shaitân Maidan or Devil's Plain, one could see far away the first of the characteristic oases of the Yarkand district. The Shaitân Maidan is a level barren slope covered with loose pebbles on which nothing can grow. It is, I fancy, really about ten miles across by the way we went, but the journey seemed endless. There was no water and no shade, and as at this elevation the sun has great power, it was also very hot. The oasis of Yakka Arik, which was our goal, was in sight every step, and seemed never to get any nearer. From a long way off I had observed two curious-looking objects about a quarter of a mile apart, near to where the cultivation commenced. As I got nearer I found they were mud towers, and had been, I imagined, built as lookout posts. Their real object, I believe, is to form places from which the Chinese officers could drill their men. The Chinese officer does not apparently drill with his men, but watches them perform their evolutions (which are nearly as complicated as those of the Empire ballet, and about as warlike) from some convenient spot.

Beyond the oases to the north and east, except in the direction of Yarkand, and reaching as far as one could see, lay the desert. Over this latter hung a thick haze, through which hundreds of "dust devils" were whirling. Far away to the south was

a dim blue line of mountains; behind us to the west were the mountains we had just come through, and to the north-east the lower spurs of the Kugart Tagh ran down into the desert. This was by far the most extensive view I had obtained since leaving Rawal Pindi, more than two months ago.

On reaching the village of Yakka Arik a quantity of excellent apricots were brought to me, and having had no fruit and but few vegetables since leaving Gilgit, I fear I made rather a hog of myself.

Azdullah had, while I was engaged in trying to stalk the gazelles, lain down and gone to sleep. His pony took the opportunity of lying down and going to sleep also, and broke my Thermos bottle, which Azdullah, contrary to orders, had fastened to his saddle, instead of carrying over his shoulder. This was a severe loss, as hot tea at any moment during a long day's stalk is very refreshing. Azdullah dared not tell me what had happened, but, as one's native servants always do, he waited till I had got into camp, had had my dinner, and was feeling at peace with the world, and then deputed Abdul to break the news to me, making himself scarce in the meanwhile. He showed some wisdom in this, and being out of reach of the first "threatening and slaughter," waited to appear till he heard me begin to laugh, when of course he escaped scot free.

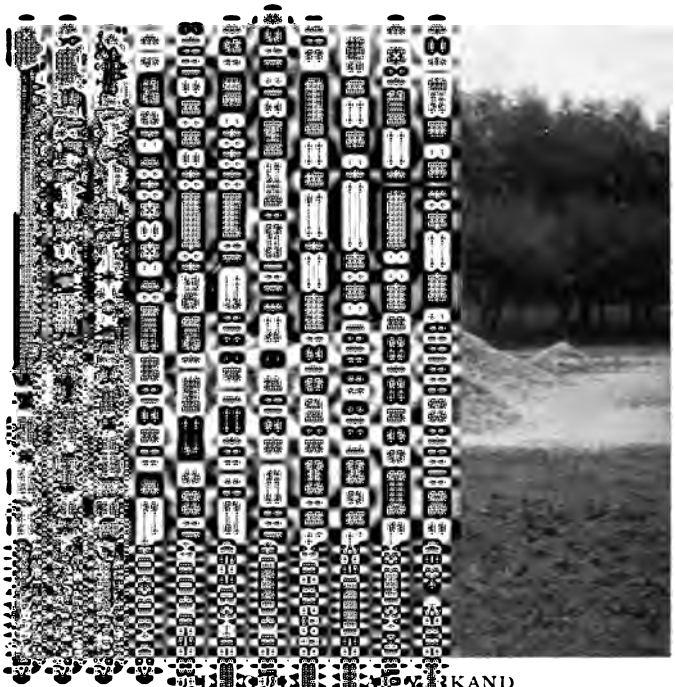
CHAPTER VI

THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN

July 13th.—We started at 7 A.M., and, after marching a mile, came to the end of the oasis and to the edge of a strip of desert about a mile wide: then we reached to another oasis, followed by three miles of desert, and then cultivation right up to Yarkand.

There is cultivation right up to the walls of the Yangi Shahr, or New City, which is defended by a deep ditch and mud walls some 20 feet high, with flanking towers on them at intervals. The Old City is very similar to the New, and adjoins it on the north side, but each has its own separate and dilapidated walls. We rode through the gate and down the main bazaar, which is about 30 feet wide, and is roofed over with matting; at the sides are the open-fronted stalls of the native tradesmen, and the more pretentious shops of the comparatively wealthy Chinese merchants: the scene was quite different from India, and for a moment I fancied I had got to an exhibition at Earl's Court, but the dirt was too realistic.

PLATE 16



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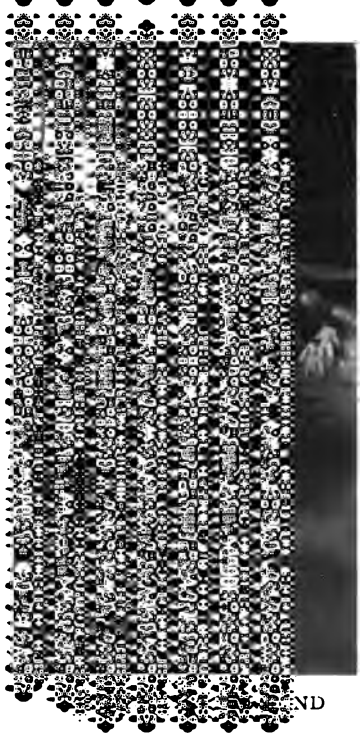


(*Page* 62)

We made a small procession, as half-a-dozen of the leading Indian merchants had ridden out to meet me, and indeed I was pleased to see some one I could talk to, though perhaps not very fluently. The Aksakal, or head of the Indian community, was rather hard to understand, as he is a Pathan, and talks little but Pushtu, and, of course, Turki. His position is analogous to that of Mayor, but he has jurisdiction over the Indian traders only. As we rode along it was rather nice to hear every now and then in the distance a man singing as he worked on his land. There is a tremendous lot of goitre here, and the Aksakal told me that his son had had one, but when he was sent to India with a caravan it disappeared. The people here attribute its prevalence to the water, which, as drains or sanitation of any kind are undreamt of, must at times be a very potent fluid.

I stayed in a nice clean house, which had a courtyard roofed with vines (the grapes were unfortunately not yet ripe), and a roofed platform open on three sides and carpeted with Khotan rugs. I spent my time on this balcony, and only went inside to dress.

The Aksakal gave me a melon and quantities of excellent apricots. It was most refreshing to me even to see the heaps of fruit and vegetables

of all kinds displayed for sale in the bazaar, as I had been without such things for some time.

The harvest had just been gathered, and the Yarkandis' method of threshing was very interesting to watch. They first beat the earth in a suitable spot hard and smooth, and then plant a pole firmly in the centre of it. This is the threshing-floor, which is then strewn with sheaves. Five or six oxen are tied tightly together in line, one being fastened to the centre pole. They are then made to walk round and round, and thresh the straw by breaking it into small pieces with their feet. The bits of straw are then all collected in a heap at a little distance from the pole, and as soon as there is a breeze the zemindar (husbandman), standing sideways to the breeze, throws the straw with a pitchfork at the top of the pole, which is about ten feet high. The heavy grains of corn fall in a heap at the foot of the pole, but the broken straw is carried by the wind, and forms another heap, perhaps fifteen feet to leeward, and becomes what in India is called *bhoosa*, which is used as fodder for the horses and cattle.

This year (1907) was said to be a cool season, and certainly the heat was no greater in the middle of July than the hottest day at home. It is quite pleasant sitting in the shade on my covered plat-

form, wearing a thin linen suit. The sun does not seem to frizzle one up in the same way as it does from April to September in the plains of India. Further on, in the desert, I found the heat greater.

This day was fairly clear, and when we started I had a good look back, and could see from here the snows of the Mustagh Range and perhaps a peak of the Hindu Kush in the west and south-west, and those of the Karakorum and Kuen Lun in the south and south-east. The line of snow-covered mountains bounded about a third of the horizon.

July 14th.—Wrote my mail, and inspected some ponies brought for me to see, but as they were heavy, underbred, and mostly about fifteen years old, I sent them all away. Then I called on the Amban, or Chinese governor, who gave me tea, a sort of oat-meal soup, and some sweet cakes which were not at all bad. Chinese etiquette is very strict in the matter of calls.

On arrival you send your card to the Amban, and intimate you propose to call on him the following day. Half-an-hour or so before paying your call you send another card. On arrival at the Amban's house you ride through a gate into a courtyard, where you dismount. Opposite the gate at which you rode in is another gate, with usually a few steps leading up to

it. This gate is generally set back from the wall, and small doors, which are seldom closed, connect it with the wall. You must not, however, go through these doors, as they are for servants and inferiors, but wait till the main doors are thrown open and the Mandarin comes forward to greet you. He will then lead you through another courtyard, and perhaps a third, into his house, politely intimating to you to precede him at each door. You politely demur, and endeavour to make him precede you, but eventually give way.

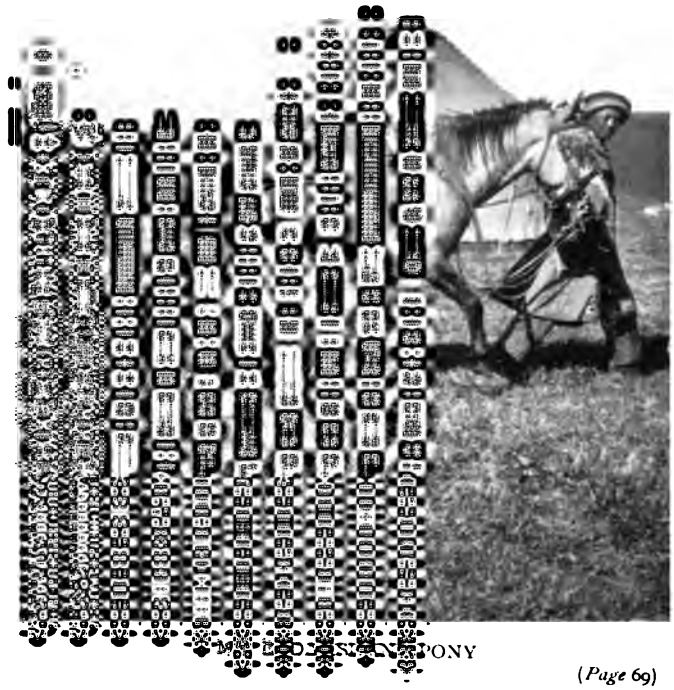
You then sit round a table and converse through your interpreters, but when, after a tea-drinking out of little bowls like ash trays, your host finishes his cup, it is a sign that the interview is over.

On your departure the same performance is gone through as on your arrival. Soon after, probably next day, your call is returned, and similar but necessarily less elaborate ceremonies performed.

Usually during his return call the Mandarin, who has probably sent you a sheep, will hint what present he would like you to give him. Tinned preserved fruits seemed to be in demand, but unfortunately I had hardly any of these.

A Chinese card is unlike a European one, and is a piece of limp red paper, about 6 × 3 inches, with the owner's name written on it in Chinese characters.

PLATE 17



[illegible]PONY

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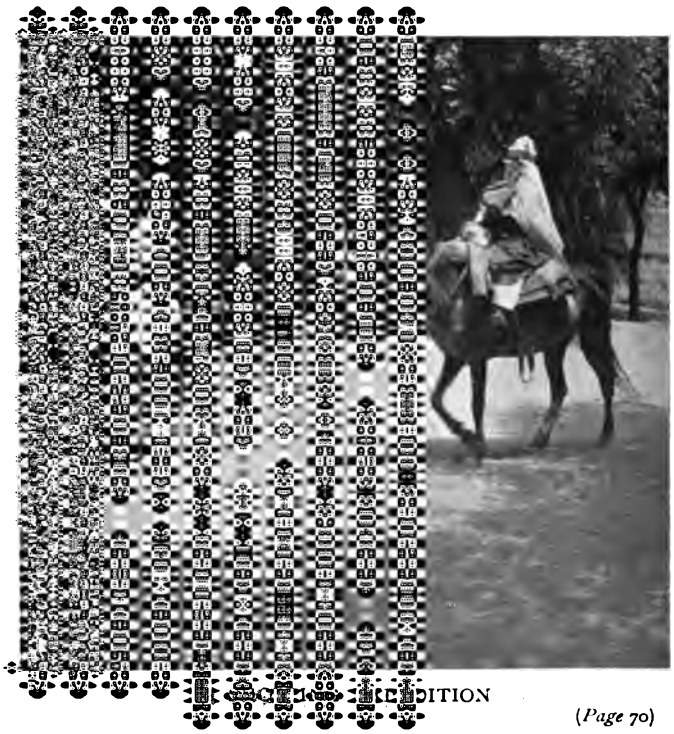

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(*Page* 70)

Afterwards I got hold of a moochi (saddler), and had some repairs done. The moochi is an oldish man with a goatee beard, quite slim, and, except in his dress, not particularly Chinese-looking. There are only a small proportion of Chinese in Yarkand, most of the population being Mohammedans.

July 15th.—More ponies came to be inspected, and these were a distinct improvement on the first lot, but I only priced them. Then I went to see the bazaar, and was entertained to a very large native lunch by the Aksakal. The luncheon was quite good, especially the rice and curry, and a sweet made of apples, but at 11 A.M. I could not eat much except fruit, of which there was abundance. Some of the leading Mohammedan merchants were also entertained at the same time: they sat on the floor, and helped themselves with their hands from a common dish, wiping their fingers occasionally on a cloth which was passed round for that purpose.

What I did not eat—and I did not taste a fiftieth part of what was put in front of me—was, I think, passed on to four or five men of lesser note, who must have had plenty, as there was enough for a dozen. On leaving I was presented with a very handsome piece of Chinese silk, and a metal ewer of native workmanship which I had admired. I was

then taken round to some other Indian shops, whose principal trade seemed to be in *charas*, that is, hemp or hashish. This trade has, however, been practically killed by the Indian Government, who have imposed a tax of about 1000 per cent. on the *charas*, as it is very harmful to those who smoke it, and the native soldiers are very fond of it.

I visited three Chinese shops, but could not find anything to buy. Khotan appears to be the best place to get silks and carpets, and Aksu for china. These Yarkand shops were full of Russian trash. I took a photograph of the bazaar in the old city, and one of the Amban in his carriage, but the light was bad in both cases.

In the evening the Amban returned my call.

Yesterday a European called; my servants unsuspectingly let him in, and he proved to be an organ-grinder. It cost me Rs. 5 to get him out again.

July 16th.—Bought a grey Badakshani pony, about 14 hands, five years, for my own riding. I gave 60 seers, which at present rate of exchange is Rs. 160, or £10, 13s. 4d., for him.

As their owners were all asking about that amount for the others I saw, I bought no more, though I wanted four. Unfortunately this may mean that I shall have to wait here another day or two.

Ten pounds is too much to give for a servant's pony.

A son of the ex-Raja of Hunza, who fled over the frontier from us in 1891, came to interview me. He said that the Chinese at first allowed him a fair income, but have cut it down lately, and now he is a poor man.

July 17th.—Bought a small bay Yarkandi stallion, about 13.3, and 7–8 years old, for 18 seers, and this evening I purchased two others, a bay about 6–7 and a grey of about 9–10 years old, for 52 seers the two; and later I got a grey about 14.2 (7 years) for 60 seers. He was bred in Badakshan, the north-east portion of Afghanistan. Ponies seem, by all accounts, to be much more difficult to get this year than last; but that is always the case when one wants to buy.

Habiballah distinguished himself by complaining that his pony, which with saddle had cost about Rs.100, was not good enough for him. I must explain that it is usual at the end of a trip to give the pony and saddle by way of backshish to the servant who rides him—*hinc illæ lacrimæ.* Now as Habiballah's market value in the Punjab would be hardly Rs.15 a month, and he is now getting Rs.30, besides Rs.5 for food and an outfit costing Rs.100, with a pony to ride on the march, all the change he

got from me was a promise to forget to give him any backshish at all if he complained again.

My two arabas (four-horse country carts, carrying about 1600 lbs. each), and marpa (two-horse cart, carrying 300 lbs.), turned up this afternoon. Their hire to Aksu is 45 seers per araba and 15 seers per marpa. The marpa keeps up with one's ponies, and can be used for oneself when tired of riding, but is very uncomfortable. The chief peculiarities of these carts are their enormously wide track, which measures about 6½ feet, and their high wheels (5 feet diameter), the marpa having the same track as the arabas, though its wheels are about a foot less in diameter. The arabas have one horse in the shafts and three leaders abreast, and the marpa is a tandem arrangement, though the drivers generally walk.

July 18th.—Started at 11 A.M. and reached Tagarchi (12–13 miles) at 1.30 A.M. The road is good, and bordered by cultivation on both sides for the whole distance. The Aksakal and several other Indian traders accompanied us for the first two miles out of Yarkand and then bade us good-bye.

This being market day, we met quite a number of people from the surrounding country who were going into the city to sell their produce and do their shopping. One of the most interesting groups was composed of a lady, evidently the wife of a well-to-do

PLATE 18

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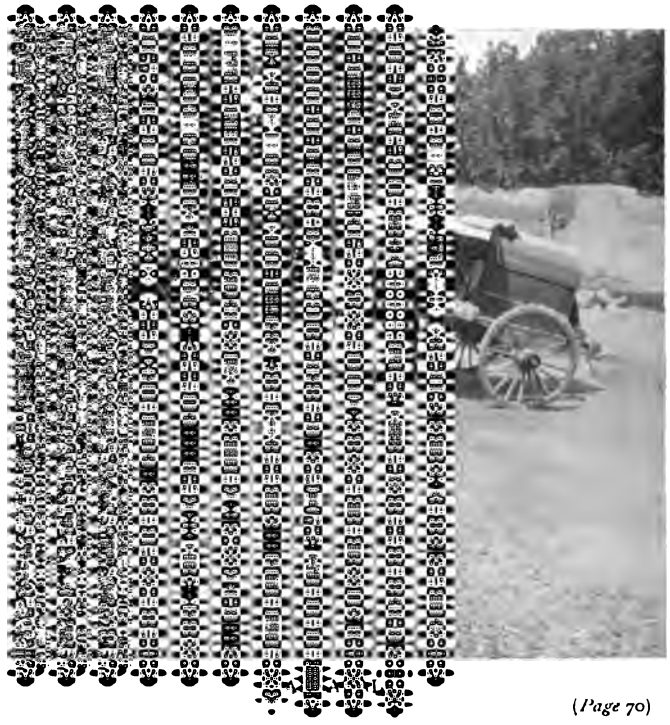

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man, and her servant. The lady herself was riding a pony, but the servant, who carried the son and heir, was mounted on a donkey. At Tagarchi I got accommodation in rather a moderate serai, the horses being led through the middle of the "living room" to reach their stable in rear. The front door opens on the village street, and the back door on the stable. The centre passage is about 7 feet wide, and has raised platforms about 18 inches high at the sides. Off this large room were five or six small rooms, but they were much too stuffy to use. This main "room" is roofed over, except a space about 12 feet by 7 feet over the centre.

I found my pony had a slight lump on the near side of his withers. I altered the stuffing of my saddle, and put a rag soaked in very salt water over the swelling.

Apricots are so plentiful in this country that, in a good season, the people here are said to feed their ponies partly on them.

July 19th.—Marched at 6.30 A.M., and at 9.45 reached my midday halting-place. I rested outside the house under a great vine loaded with grapes, as yet unripe, which was as good as a roof. I bought some melons on the road, and ate one about as big as one's two fists for breakfast. The melons were hardly ripe yet, but this one was excellent.

Went on again at 4.30 P.M., and reached Salejilik (said to be ten miles) at 6.10 P.M. This year there are no floods, but last year the road was flooded in two places to a depth of a foot for stretches of a mile each.

I am feeding my ponies with about 6 lbs. of uncrushed maize and 2 lbs. bran and chopped lucerne hay, in two feeds morning and evening, and at midday as much chopped lucerne as they will eat.

To-day my servants forgot to cork tightly my bottle of lime-juice, which I had brought all the way from Srinagar to use in this warm part of my march, and the whole was spilt.

July 20th.—Marched at 6.45, and got to the mid-day halting-place at 9.45, the distance being about fourteen miles. We came to the first uncultivated stretch at about the seventh mile, and here the gad-flies commenced to attack our ponies. Lailik is a very small oasis of some thirty acres, but it boasts a serai, which, however, was full of flies.

We started again at 4.45 P.M., on a road through sand-hills covered with bushes three or four feet high (tigers are said to come as far south as this in winter), and then for the last two and a quarter miles through cultivation to Langar Awat, where we camped in the serai. This serai was dirty and unpleasantly full of flies, perhaps be-

cause it was situated in the middle of the village. The distance is said to be eight miles. I should think it was more. We got in at 7.15 P.M.

July 21st. — Started again at 6.50 A.M., and reached Achdung at 9.45. This is said to be ten miles, but these people reckon in phutai, and one phutai equals two and a half miles nominally, but is really a mile and a bittock, *i.e.* it varies from one and a half to three miles. I passed a small jheel, on which a number of wild duck were swimming, and tried to shoot one with the pea-rifle, but they were too wary, and finally I fired a shot at one fellow, about 250 yards off, just to show there was no ill-feeling; to my surprise the bullet went within about a foot of him.

Marched to Ala-Aigyr (4.15 to 8.30), a distance of seven phutai, but, I think, a good nineteen miles. The last two miles of this journey was through a forest of trees, perhaps fifty feet high, a most unusual size in this country. In a normal year much of this road would be under water, but the river is now said to be lower than it has been for ten years.

The serai to-night is a large covered-in yard: my bed is on a daïs at one side, and the ponies are stabled opposite. The owner's "house" is a sort of loose box, partitioned off by wooden pales

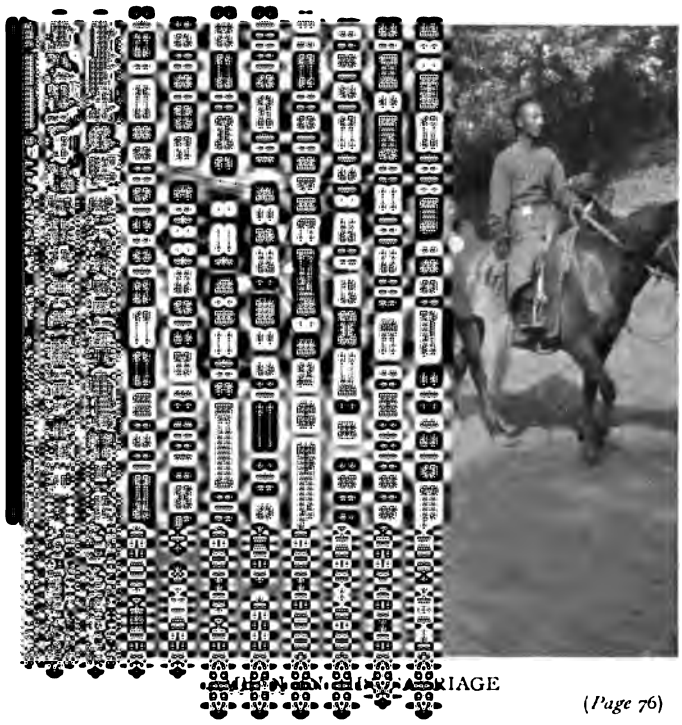
about eight feet high, in the darkest corner of the yard. I was not at all uncomfortable, and slept better than for some time.

July 22nd.—Marched at 7.45, and reached Tong at 10.15 A.M. (about nine miles). Started again at 5 P.M., and reached Aksak Maral at 6.55 (seven miles). From this place one could just see the dim blue hills northward. I hoped to get a shot at a jheron (Yarkand gazelle) here in the early morning, but, owing to a water famine, they do not come within twelve miles this year.

July 23rd.—Marched at 7.20 A.M., and reached Shamal at 12.30 (about twenty miles, which were called eight phutai). An unpleasant march, with a good deal of deep going and plenty of dust. Last year there were floods out, and this march was said to have taken nine hours. The women in this country wear their hair in two long pigtails, often connected with a piece of string about six inches long. Some indulge in four pigtails—a sign, I suppose, that they are well off for hair. But when I found to-day a cap, with two pigtails sewn on it, hanging on the wall from a peg, I wondered whether after all these extra pigtails are not the local equivalents of "fringes" and "transformations." These women also, as a rule, wear high heels on the goloshes of their Kirghiz boots.

I camped under a sort of verandah, which was

PLATE 19



[illegible] MARRIAGE

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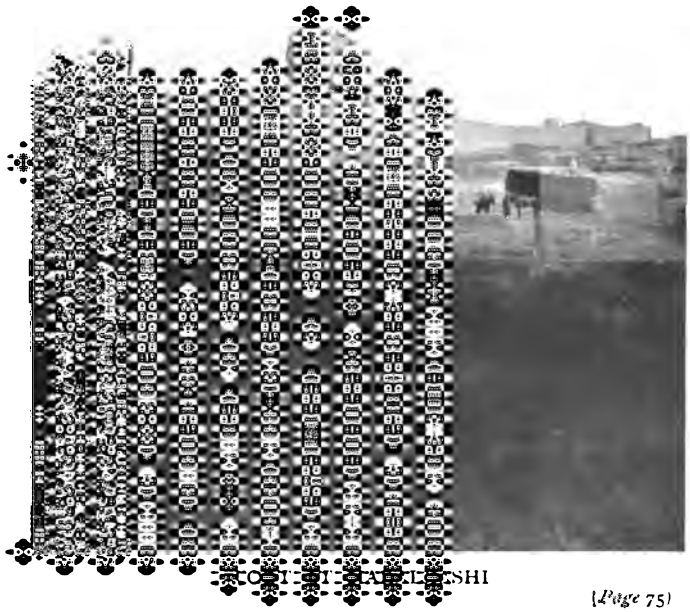

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practically in the open street of the village. A bullock came and sniffed at me as I was reading, and it was difficult to keep the fowls away. A swallow was sitting on her nest, within six feet of my head, as I wrote.

July 24th.—Marched at 7.10 A.M., and reached Maralbashi about 11.30, where I found a telegraph office in the fort, and despatched a wire to Macartney, at Kashgar, asking him to forward a message to England for me. I wonder what sort of a hash—if anything at all—will get home. Kashgar is about 150 miles east of this place.

Every Chinese town in Turkestan contains a so-called fort. These forts are not so much military posts or strategic bases as cities of refuge for the Chinese inhabitants and their sympathisers in the event of an insurrection again taking place.

The walls are duly certified to Pekin as being made of hard bricks and kept in good repair, whereas they are really made of nothing more durable than mud. The Mandarin in charge divides the plunder thus extracted from the central government with the inspecting officer, who makes periodic visits and reports all to be in order.

The Amban came unexpectedly into the telegraph office and found me there, and we hobnobbed quite amicably—that is, considering the circum-

stances, for, of course, the Amban is a Chinaman. The old man paid me out, though, by coming to call when I did not expect him. He caught me *en déshabillé* in my old clothes and carpet slippers, with no tea ready and no preparations for his reception. He seemed quite pleased, though, and evidently thinks that he is doing the right thing by the barbarian he has encountered—the uncivilised Englishman. He is really a nice old man, and scrambled into his marpa on leaving with the activity of a monkey.

Maralbashi is a small edition of Yarkand without the goitre, but with more mosquitoes. I am quartered in a house which has a sort of little hall of audience, where I sit on a daïs at the end and sleep on another at the side. A man, described as a "fakir of this country," is strumming on a banjo outside, and singing a little song in Turki to his own accompaniment. This is quite pleasant to hear, and reminds me of "the river," and indeed is the only Eastern music I have ever heard which is other than discordant.

I was presented to-day with some nectarines, about the size of very small English apricots, of a deep crimson colour and—bitter disappointment—hopelessly unripe.

The telegraph wire passes close to the bagh I

am writing in—quite an inspiring sight. No news of a mail yet; perhaps I may get one in Aksu.

On July 25th I paid a visit to the Aksakal—an Indian Mayor—and then to the Amban. The latter entertained a friend and myself to an afternoon meal, which consisted of lumps of meat of various kinds, oily salads, soup (rather good), Chinese tea, rice, and arrack for wine. These dainties are arranged in little bowls in the centre of the table. The custom is to take a piece of meat out of any dish you fancy with your chopsticks, dip it in the salad, and then convey it to your mouth, and repeat the process. With the rice you are supposed to hold the bowl (your own) to your open mouth and shovel the contents in with your chopsticks. But these implements were beyond me, and I had to resort to a fork. The arrack you drank out of little flattish china bowls, holding about an egg-cupful; and you take tea (a few stalks drowned in straw-coloured water, without milk or sugar), out of bowls holding a small tea-cupful. I did not dare to watch the cooking.

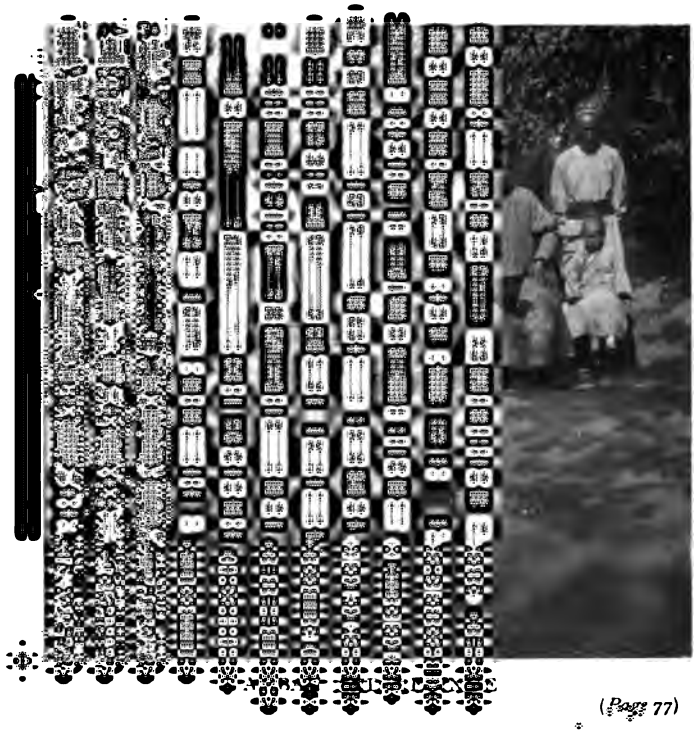
July 26th.—Marched at 7.50 and reached Charbagh at 11.20 (15 miles). Here I discovered my pony to be slightly lame, and not being able to find the cause, had his shoes taken off. This was accomplished with some difficulty, as he strongly objected to the process.

July 27th.—Marching at 5.55, we reached Tumchuk (18 miles) at 10 A.M. I had a fall off Abdul's pony, who, being rebuked for stumbling, began star-gazing and going sideways, and finally fell over a tuft of grass, and lay on my leg, pinning me under him. I beat him as he lay there with hearty good-will, not feeling very pleased with him. When he got up, I unfastened his breastplate and made it into a standing martingale, and so prevented his repeating this performance.

Though our road this day was marked out by the telegraph wires, which ran alongside it, my cook managed to lose his way, and did not rejoin us till the midday halt the following day, having done a march "on his own" of nearly forty miles.

As this is the main road to Pekin, it has Chinese serais all along it at intervals of twelve to eighteen miles. These serais consist of a large outer court-yard where the carts, horses, and drivers put up, and an inner one where the travellers are quartered. There is only one door into the inner court from each of the buildings of which three sides of this court consist. In the end building two rooms on each side open off the centre one. This centre room is lighted only by the door, the others have a window each. The side buildings contain three rooms each, instead of five. In each room is a mud daïs about

PLATE 20



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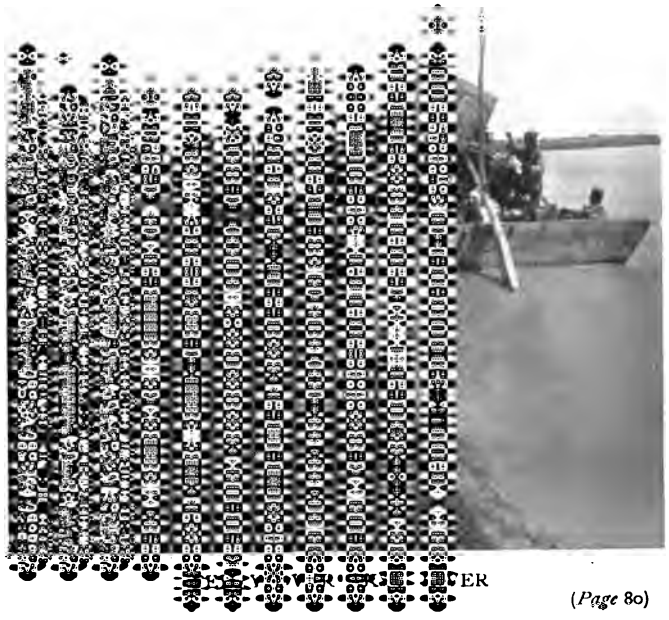

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two feet high, occupying the back and about half of the total space. The cook-house is in one corner.

July 28th.—Marched at 4.35 A.M., and reached Chadir Kul (14 miles) at 7.40. The road is for three miles through cultivation, then bush with a single house at the sixth mile, then more bush up to Chadir Kul. No supplies or transport were obtainable here, but fuel was plentiful, and there was a pool of good water 400 yards in diameter close to the village. The road was rather heavy going (sand) in places. A hospitable old couple in whose house I stayed during the hot hours gave me some very good milk.

Marched again at 4.45 P.M., and reached Yaka Kuduk at 7.20 P.M. The serai here had been lately used by some Chinese travellers, and was consequently so dirty that I camped on a verandah in the village street, instead of using the serai.

July 29th.—After a very disturbed night, for carts and donkeys kept arriving from midnight to dawn, I marched at 5.20 to Yaida Urteng (16 miles), a wretched little place, with a dirty serai and brackish water, which we reached at 9 A.M. Fortunately, it being a cloudy day, I was able to rest under a small tree while the ponies were off-saddled. We started again at 11.10 A.M., and reached Chilan (about 13 miles) at 2.30 P.M.

July 30th.—Marched at 5.50 to Schol Kudak

(22 miles). The men, thinking the day would be cloudy, which it was not, did not get started early, so I had a hot march, which ended at 11.20 A.M. at a wretched, dirty little place, where not a tree or a blade of grass existed, and only one little well of very brackish water. I felt too unwell to write.

July 31*st*.—Marched at 5.35, and reached Aikul (18 miles) at 10.15 A.M. Trees and fields, and good water at last. I was very glad of this oasis, as I had not had any really good water since the third march out of Yarkand. For the last four marches the water had been very nasty. Brackish water taints all one's food, especially tea and soup. I had lived chiefly on boiled eggs and indifferent milk, and hardly possessed the energy to move. I had a thirst and a "mouth" all the time, and nothing except the milk, which was generally saltish also, to alleviate them with. I tried one of my cherished pints of champagne last night, and though my inside would only let me drink a port glassful, as if it had been medicine, I slept better than usual after it.

August 1*st*.—Started at 5.50 A.M., but owing to a canal having broken its bank and flooded the road, and to our having to make a long detour down stream in order to reach the ferry over the Aksu River, which was in flood, we did not reach the east bank till noon. Here was a pleasant shady

village in which I rested. Being told that Aksu was five phutai on, I sent forward the carts and two servants, and being accustomed to march one phutai in about thirty-five minutes, I did not start again till 4.30 P.M., expecting to be in camp by 7.30. I actually arrived at Aksu at 9.45, having marched without halting at all. I swallowed the flat champagne opened two nights ago with some thankfulness, as, though better, I was not very fit yet.

August 2nd.—At Aksu I indulged in a Europe morning (= a long lie), and said I was too seedy to interview any Ambans, but received the Indian traders who came to call on me. I am camped in the middle of a bagh (= garden), in a similar place to the one I stayed in at Yarkand, but better, as it is open on all four sides instead of three.

Chinese small change is peculiar.

1 seer (3s. 6d.) = 16 tongas.
1 tonga = 25 dalchen.

There are three silver coins, one of which represents 8 tongas, a simple enough sum; but the two others, as they are worth respectively 4 tongas 20 dalchen and 3 tongas 5 dalchen, are much harder to reckon.

I was awfully disappointed, on opening a large envelope I found waiting for me, to discover it contained: (1) a letter from Macartney, (2) balance-

sheet of Cavalry Club, (3) an application for a subscription to the Army Rifle Association. Not a word from home. Macartney's letter was dated July 12th. The Chinese post takes about fourteen days from Kashgar here. The last English home letters I got were dated 29th May, and reached me 6th July. I think the Russian post must be slower than the Indian one, though in English-speaking countries it would make the journey to Kashgar in ten or twelve days. Perhaps the Russians are busy searching letters for hints of plots and dynamite!

I was tempted to photograph a man at the ferry yesterday, who had his earnings in dalchen slung round his waist by a string: they must have weighed enough to drown him if he fell in, though only worth a shilling or two.

August 4th.—Did nothing yesterday but rest, though feeling all right again. I have purchased a lot of supplies here (rice, flour, &c.), as no grains are grown in Illi. My caravan will be twenty-five pony-loads when I start to-morrow.

The Amban sent a native band to entertain me this afternoon. It consisted of a flute-player, a fiddler, a performer on a native banjo or zither, a tambourine man, and a "bones."

They played and sang for some time, and I really quite enjoyed listening to them and watch-

PLATE 21

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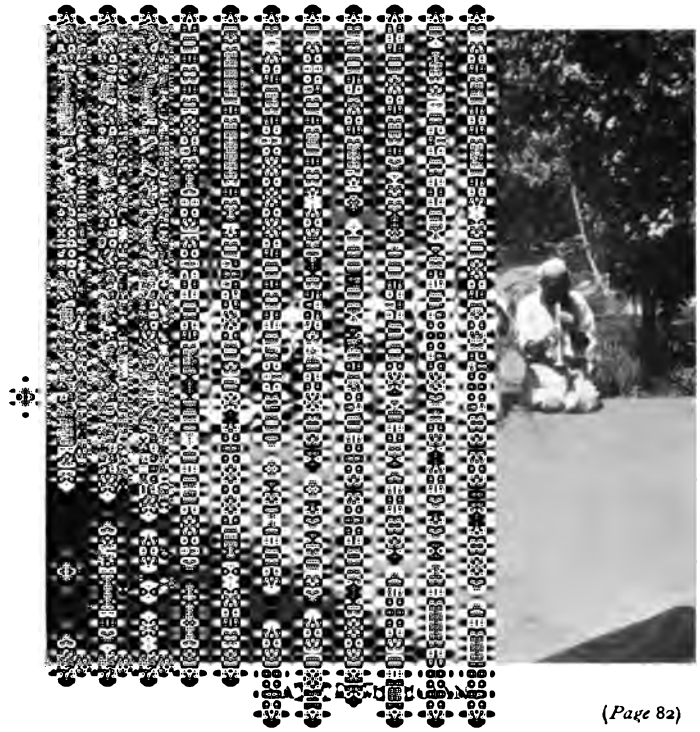

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ing their performance from my "house." Finally I gave them some backshish and sent them away well content.

August 5th.—Had to wait, as the ponies were not ready. This was a nuisance, especially as a field 100 yards off, and to windward of my residence, was being manured.

August 6th.—Bought three china bowls, which were supposed to be old, and a Chinese lady's coat, covered with what seemed to be old and good embroidery.

Started at 6.50, and reached Jam (20 miles) at 11.45. The road was hot and uninteresting. Unfortunately the serai at Jam was also one of the worst I have encountered: the smells were awful, and I had to dodge the flies by going to bed inside my mosquito net.

August 7th.—Started at 5.30, and reached Avat (18 miles), at 10.45. The way was over a flat, waterless plain covered with stones, up to a gap in a line of steep red hills: half a mile beyond this gap, close to the muddy Avat River, the serai was situated.

August 8th.—Started at 5.50, and, crossing the Avat River, marched (16 miles) to Kizil Bolak, arriving there at 10.20 A.M. I found there a little water and a few trees. I waited till 4.5 P.M., and then marched on to Kunya Shah (5 miles), which

I reached at 5.30. Here is a very deep and rapid stream 100 yards wide. There is a Chinese fort in the narrow entrance to the valley. It is flanked on one side by a wall, which runs partly up the precipitous hills, and on the other by the river. Like most Chinese forts, it is commanded by higher ground all round, and its garrison consisted of three customs clerks. I was glad, in spite of the strong wind blowing down the nullah, to pitch my tent on a bit of clean grass, instead of camping in a smelly serai, after a tiresome march over barren stony ground.

August 9th.—Started at 6.45 for a twenty-mile march over a very stony road, and after waiting an hour at a small village on the road to avoid a heavy rainstorm and allow the baggage to catch up, I reached Kailik at 2.35 P.M. While on the way I saw my native guide suddenly dismount and begin to throw stones as hard as he could at something close to him, which proved to be a brownish snake, about as thick as my little finger and about 14 inches long: he had killed it by the time I reached him.

Camped again in my tent, as the serai was unattractive. As to-day was cloudy, we have hopes that there will be less water than usual at the bad ford we have to cross to-morrow. A man who tried to cross there three days ago was drowned.

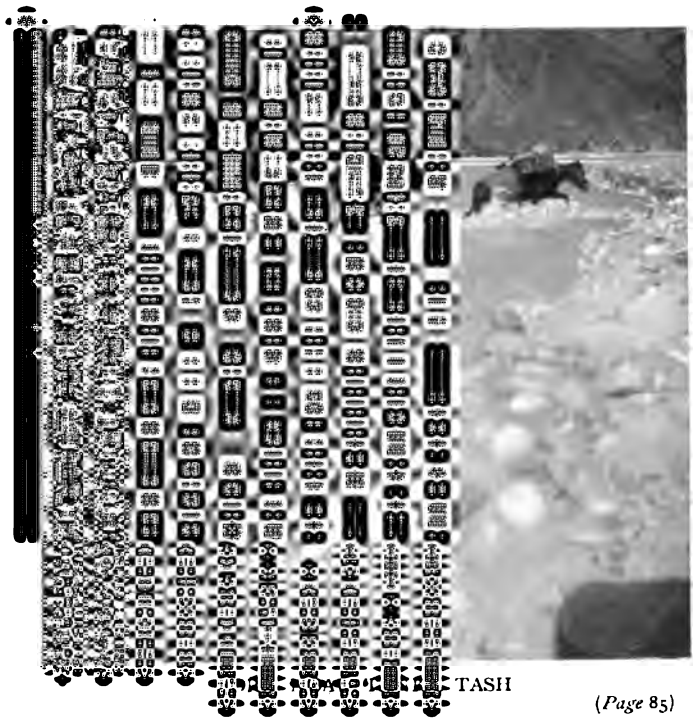
August 10th.—Started at 7.15 A.M., marched

15 miles, and reached camp at Tanka Tash (8700 feet) at 4.20 P.M. Two miles above our last night's camp we had to ford the river; and though the water was most fortunately low, owing to the cloudy day yesterday, it took us till 10 A.M. to cross. With another foot or so of water this ford would be very dangerous, as the pace of the current is tremendous; to-day I do not think the water was more than two feet deep. The river-bed here, and indeed as far as the Japarlik Glacier, except two or three miles where the valley widens out a little, takes up the whole of the bottom of the valley, the mountains on both sides descending sheer into the bed of the Mozart River. I am camped on one side of the river-bed, on the shingle, under a perpendicular cliff. A mile above camp the huge Japarlik Glacier suddenly blocks up the whole of the valley, now about 400 yards wide, and that portion of it which can be seen from here seems to rise from 400 feet to 800 feet above the bottom of the valley.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROMISED LAND

August 11th.—Started at 7.10 A.M., marched 20 miles, and reached camp at Khan Ayaluk at 6.30 P.M. It took us seven and a half hours from the time we left camp to reach the place where the valley leading to the pass turned away at right angles from the glacier. Just opposite here was a fine peak, called by my guides Argi Arluk, at least 20,000 feet high. The glacier was like a frozen sea, with waves about 50 feet high, and everywhere covered with stones of all sizes. The road was difficult for the ponies, being steep and often slippery, and winds about all over the glacier—first in one direction, and then in another. But when we left the glacier to go over the top of the pass (11,460 feet) the road improved, and it was delightful to find here good grass, flowers, and fir trees, none of which I had seen since I left the valley of Kashmir. This pleasure was, however, rather dashed by an icy thunderstorm which came on as soon as we reached the top of the pass. Not being very fit yet, I had some trouble getting



TASH

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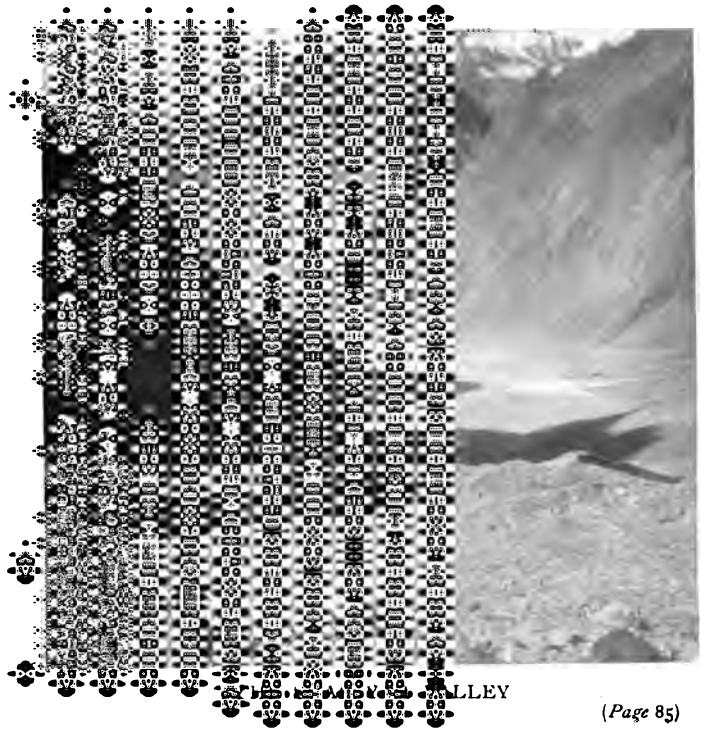

LLEY

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up the glacier, though I rode most of the way. Camp, 8750 feet.

August 12th.—The opening day's grouse shooting will be in full swing as I write here at 6.30 P.M. (12.30 P.M. in England), and I wonder what sort of sport they are getting at home.

I marched at 9.35 A.M., and reached camp at 2.45 P.M., after a short and easy march over grassy meadows covered with wild flowers and through belts of pine trees. My camp is on a bluff, looking down the valley of the Mozart or Urteng River, and 100 feet above the water. There are two Mozart Rivers, one flowing S.E. from the pass (called also the Shah Yar River) and eventually evaporating in Lob Nor Lake, and the other (called also the Urteng) flowing north into the Illi River and Lake Balkash.

The usual storm came tearing up the valley at 5.30 P.M., but this time did not bring rain with it. As, however, my servants had pitched my tent with the door facing the wind, it was all but carried away.

Namgoon, the guide, who had been reported dead, turned up to-day apparently in the best of health. He is a quaint-looking old Kalmuck with a pigtail, dressed in the dirtiest poshteen (= sheepskin coat) that ever was seen, and carrying a rifle across his back. All these people have rifles, and unfortunately use them. This particular weapon is a single-loading,

bolt-action rifle, sighted up to 1200 yards or metres, and not in very good order: it bears no maker's name, but another rifle I saw had "Mauser" on it. Two prongs about 18 inches long were fastened to it, about a foot from the muzzle; they are used to form a rest when firing.

Yesterday Habiballah gave me the useful piece of information that the days in this month are longer than at any other time of the year. I cannot "suffer fools gladly," and Habiballah would be not a little surprised if he knew how cheerfully I could murder him sometimes. When I am tired or seedy, I find him very trying.

August 13th.—Marched at 8.40 A.M., and reached Shattu at 11.45. I was told last night the distance was 4 miles; it is really 10 or 12. Up to this point we were in the narrow, wooded valley of the Mozart River, but immediately after we turned sharp to the right, and facing eastward we skirted the foot of the hills south of the Tekkes Valley till we reached a large stream, on which is a Kalmuck encampment, called Aksu Karaul. The Valley of the Tekkes is here a grassy plain, perhaps 15 miles wide, we being some 10 miles distant from the river and south of it. It is not unlike some of the grassy plains of British East Africa, but the grass, though not so long, is much more varied in kind, and better

in quality. Whereas, however, such a plain would in East Africa be covered with herds of hartebeest, zebra, gazelle, and other game, here nothing is visible.

When we reached Aksu Karaul (22 miles) at 3 P.M., we found two khourgas ready for us, and I had hardly got inside mine when a heavy rain driven by half a gale of wind commenced, and lasted till 6 P.M., making things quite as cold and wet as in Scotland. I noticed several flocks of sheep on the hillsides as we passed, the shepherds being all mounted on bullocks. Elevation of camp, 6050 feet.

August 14th.—Marched at 8.50 A.M., and reached Kazak village on Agoyas River at 5.20 P.M. After going two hours, I was told by the local Kazaks that the place I intended to camp at was distant about as far as I had already come: but it must have been two or three times as far—that is, instead of being 8 miles on, it must have been a good 18.

I took a photo of a group of Kalmucks at Aksu Karaul before starting. They wear pigtails, have very high cheek-bones, narrow eyes, and flat faces. Their "foot-wear" consists often of pieces of numdah. Some wear short coats and Chinese trousers, but Namgoon wears a long coat which may once have been leather or linen; it is now mainly black grease.

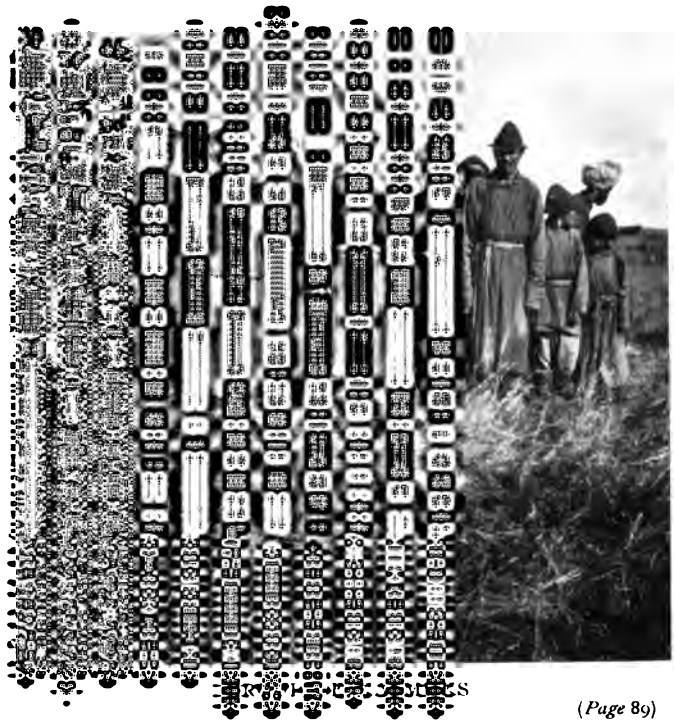
The Kalmucks are Buddhists, and although both poorer and less numerous than the Kazaks, seem to

be a much braver and more manly race, and are feared accordingly by the Kazaks. They are good mountaineers, and make capital shikaries. There are also a few Kirghiz in Illi; they resemble the Kazaks but are more Oriental in type: their women are easily distinguished from Kazak women by the huge white turbans which they wear.

On this march the long grass seemed to be full of larks, some of which our caravan of course put up as it went along. A small hawk, apparently a merlin, was well aware of this, and kept following us. As soon as a lark had been put up and flown a few yards, the merlin would swoop down like a flash, and carry it off. The wretched larks had very little chance, and could only escape by subsiding at once into the grass, or by dodging almost underneath our ponies.

On arrival here, I photographed a group of Kazaks. They are much nearer the European type to look at, and they call themselves Mohammedans; they usually wear fur-lined caps over skull-caps on their shaven heads. When greeting you they take off their fur cap as a mark of respect—a custom, as far as I have seen, rare in Asia, where men generally salute one by taking off their shoes, or out-of-doors by making a salaam. Two of the bigger men wore a sort of black alpaca coat down to the knees, and

PLATE 23



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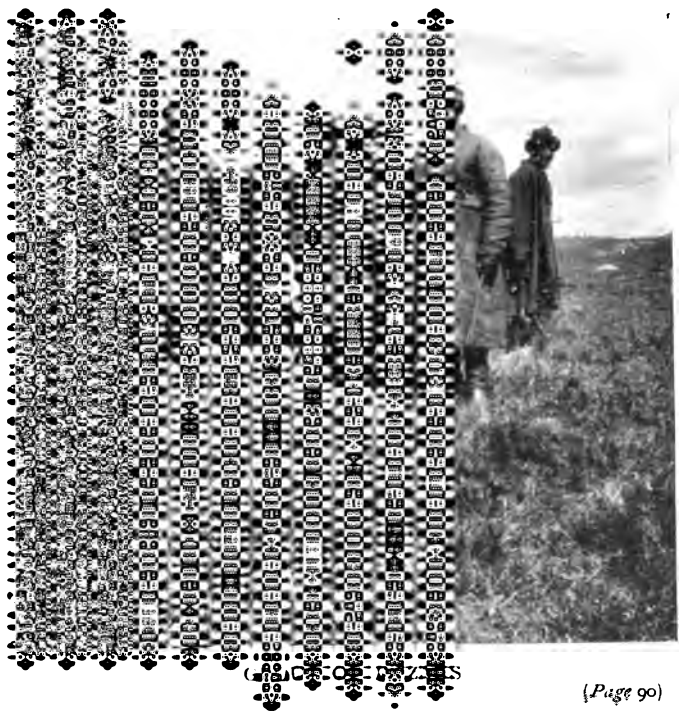

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loose riding trousers of the same material, or of black leather. Some wear the Kirghiz high boots, others a sort of "Wellingtons." I once saw a man riding across a ford, with little on except a pair of these enormous Lifeguardsmen's boots, to which his bare thighs gave a most comic effect.

Theft and murder seem rife, though I am told Europeans are not often molested. I suppose the risks and penalties are too great, as if a European were murdered, the Chinese authorities would feel bound to do something, and would probably punish the nearest villagers indiscriminately. Two days ago my servants found the body of a man who had been murdered for the money he had on him, and to-day a stray Kalmuck came to me and complained that he had been shot at, knocked over the head, and robbed of his pony and clothes a mile from this village; but of course, all I could do for him was to dress his wound. To-day we made a long march, about 26 miles, but the going was good. Elevation, 5500 feet.

August 15th.—It took two and a half hours to get all the baggage across the ford, and loaded up again on the far side: the ford was too deep for loaded ponies to cross, so I had to get some camels, and as only ten were available they had to make two journeys each. The current of the Agoyas is very

swift—I should think about 7 miles an hour at this season. The river is about 80 yards wide, but the ford, being diagonal, is about 250 yards long.

After crossing we marched along the Tekkes River, into which the Agoyas flows, to Moin Tai, about 15 miles. About a mile from camp we came on some people building a house, at which I was surprised, as all the inhabitants of this country are nomads and live in khourgas, but on inquiry I found these people were Kashgar traders who intended to stay for two years. There was in the khourga I occupied yesterday a piece of embroidery on silk which I rather fancied; but my host, who is said to be the owner of at least 3000 ponies, worth from £4 to £10 each, would not sell it, saying that his daughter had worked it for him herself.

August 16th.—Left camp at 8.45 A.M. and reached Chelakturuk at 5.10 P.M., halting for one hour and forty minutes on the way. Here we leave the Kulja Road, and strike off for Koksu Nullah, where, at about longitude 83° E. and latitude 42° 25′ N., I hope to do the bulk of my shooting. I hoped that my messenger, sent on ahead from Aksu to Kulja, would have met me here with my letters, but he did not arrive. Elevation of camp, 4400 feet. I got out my net to-day and caught a few butterflies.

August 17th.—I left Chelakturuk about 10 A.M.,

and marched about 14 miles to my next camp, about 4 miles above the Kok Su Bridge, which we reached at 1.15 P.M. Tried to get a pheasant for the pot, but only saw one, an old cock, who gave me a long shot but escaped.

On my arrival here I found that a Kalmuck named Nurla, to whom I had written in March, and again from Tashkurgan, to engage as my shikari, had taken service with another sahib. This was annoying, as it appeared that he had been told by this gentleman's servants that I had fallen ill and was not coming. Probably they never told their master that I had had letters written to engage the man, or perhaps my own servants may have made up the whole story, knowing that, as I do not speak Turki, it would be almost impossible for me to find out what had really happened.

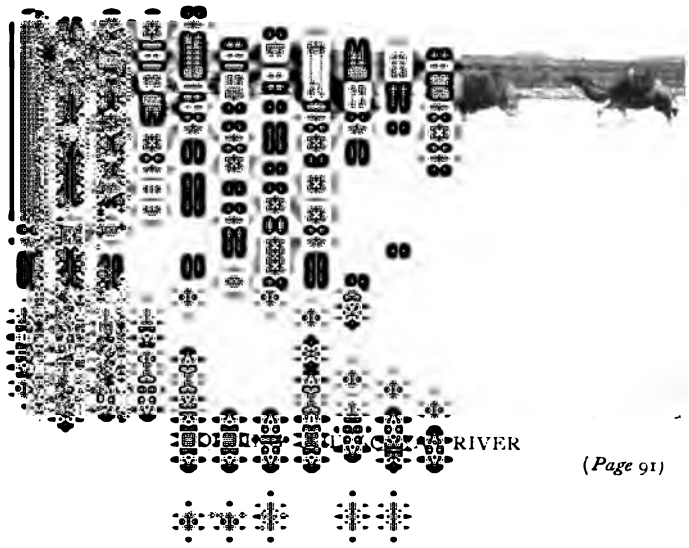
I afterwards saw the "chit" (character) which this gentleman gave to Nurla. He did not seem at all pleased with him, and said he was not only very conceited, but tried to play a favourite trick of the worst type of Kashmir shikari on him. These men, if their employer happens to be inexperienced and a bad shot, sometimes take out with them in a bottle some fresh blood obtained from a chicken or sheep. If a shot is fired and the animal not bagged the shikari runs on ahead and spills a little blood in various places

along the track. This he shows to the sahib when he comes up, as evidence that the animal has been badly wounded, and asks leave to pursue alone, saying, with truth, that he can travel faster so. If permission is given him, he will go off, and return with a trophy of some kind, supposedly that of the wounded animal, but really belonging to one which he has shot himself.

My camp is in rather a nice place on the Kok Su River, which is here nearly 80 yards wide. I caught a few more butterflies at this camp.

Namgoon, said by Colonel Appleton to be a very good guide but a poor shikari, who had been sent to look for Nurla, turned up to-day with Nurla's son and "bhai" (=brother, but used of even distant relations). These two are said to be fairly good shikaries. The bhai, whose name was Arka, became my stalker, and the son, Ihr Jan, his assistant. Both turned out to be excellent fellows.

August 18*th*.—Marched first up the valley of the little stream, at whose junction with the Kok Su River I camped yesterday, and then over some rolling downs to a large Kazak encampment at Kara Jung. This is in the middle of a fine grass country about the middle of the uplands between the Tekkes and the Kok Su River. The latter stream makes a right-angled turn about 25 miles above its junction



RIVER

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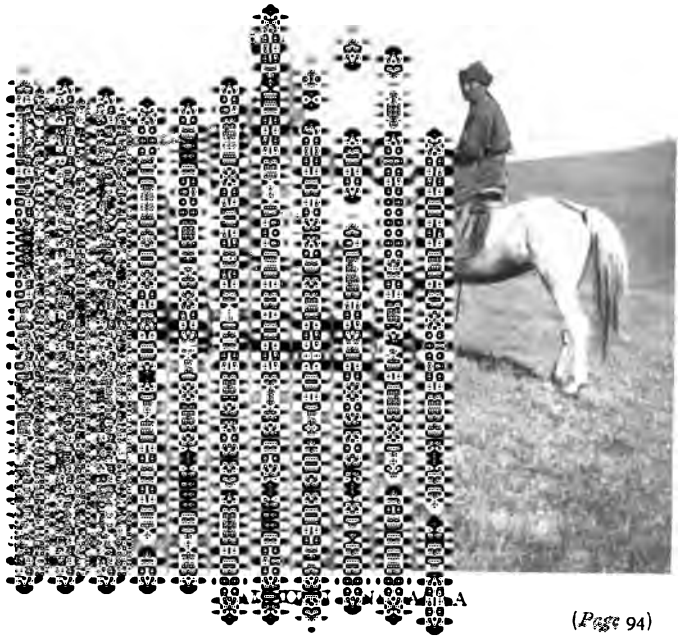

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with them, but some curious-looking animals, one with each herd. On examination through my glasses these latter proved to be oxen ridden by boys—even the shepherds were mounted!

August 20th.—Did not get away till 11 A.M., as the men were very slow in loading the ponies. A good many Kazaks came to see us off, and, from the clamour they made, it might be imagined that I was forcibly taking without pay the best pony of every man present. The reason for the noise was merely that all natives like to look on and give advice, at the top of their voices, to any one else who happens to be doing any work. In this case, while two men were loading a pony, perhaps twenty others would sit on the ground and offer suggestions: although no one listens to any one else, the whole twenty-two would talk hard all the time. These Kazaks are very fond of hawking, and a man riding about carrying his favourite hawk on his wrist is a common sight.

The march was only about 12 miles to-day, and we camped by the Kok Su River (elevation, 8200 feet) at a place called Kordai. The baggage took five hours on the march. I sent off a letter *viâ* Kulja and Russia, and this diary up to date *viâ* Aksu, Kashgar, and Gilgit, to England, by my Aksu pony-men, whom I paid off and dismissed at this point. Both letter and diary arrived safely.

En route I called on one of the chief men, who entertained me and my servants with mare's milk. This tasted more like very sour and hard small beer than anything! It is kept for about ten days in a sort of tub with a soft leather cover to it. A wooden pole is inserted through a hole in the centre of this cover, and the opening closed by then tying the leather round the pole. Every now and then the contents of the tub are stirred up by means of this pole. A liking for this koumiss, as it is called, seemed to me to be decidedly an acquired taste, but these people drink gallons of it, and, during the summer, live on little else.

From this encampment our route lay over high and very undulating downs covered with herds of cattle, sheep, and horses. I saw a rather nice wooden milk-bowl, made by the Kazaks, but it was too cumbersome to add to my baggage. These Kazaks seldom walk more than a few yards at a time, and consequently the older and richer men get very fat.

August 21st.—Marched at 9.30 A.M., and reached camp at head of Jirgalen (9170 feet) and at the junction of the streams from the Kurdia (11,850 feet) and Sari Tur Passes at 3.45 P.M. Before passing over the Kurdia, which, though stony, is easy going, we saw five ibex, but, as none seemed over 40 inches, we did not pursue. Immediately after crossing this pass we

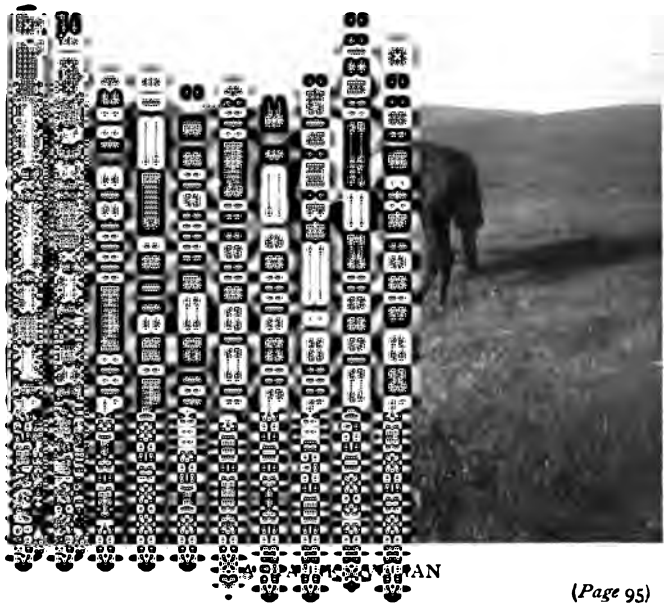
came on a herd of about fifteen karelini (wild sheep), but they had no intention of being made targets of, and were quickly out of sight downhill.

About 2.45 a heavy rain came on, which degenerated into a drizzle and continued all night.

My cold had now disappeared, but I had not yet got rid of a tiresome cough, which had commenced at Maralbashi.

August 22nd.—I did not start till 11 A.M., as the clouds were down, but reached the Sari Tur Pass about 12.30.. Here the rain changed to snow, and, it being difficult to see more than 100 yards ahead, old Namgoon lost his way. Fortunately he soon found it again, as wandering about looking for one's way at an elevation of 11,690 feet in a snowstorm is not very amusing. A little further on, the snow having by this time ceased, we saw a little herd of about half-a-dozen karelini ewes.

We had made about 11 miles when we camped at 3 P.M. at the junction of several wide grass-covered valleys, but below our camp to the south the ground towards the Kok Su becomes very steep. Elevation, 10,000 feet. Rain recommenced about 4.30 P.M., and, as may be imagined, the air got raw and chilly to a degree. I saw a herd of some seventy ponies on the pass at over 11,000 feet.



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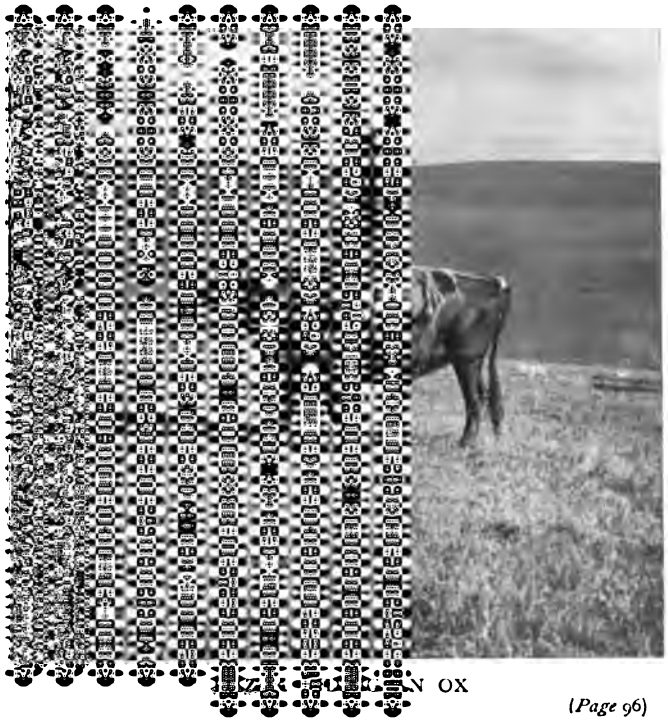

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CHAPTER VIII

SPORT IN KOK SU

August 23rd.—Did not start till 9 A.M., as clouds were low. Went east, and, greatly to my disappointment, saw absolutely nothing. Arka, my Kalmuck shikari, said he saw a snow-leopard, but I expect the leopard saw him also, as, when I went to pay my respects to him, he was nowhere to be seen. The ground was very soft to ride over, and both Namgoon and Abdul got bogged and dismounted ungracefully on their heads. My dâk at last arrived from Kulja, but only contained a note from Messrs. Cox & Co., and another from a sportsman named Dixon, at Kulja. No home letters and no papers!

August 24th.—Struck out westwards, but only saw some karelini ewes. Returned to camp about 1.30, and wrote letters. I discovered that a mouse had got into my tent and had been amusing himself by eating holes in my Peshawari poshteen.

August 25th.—Clouds low, and rain all day; too wet either to stalk or move camp. Sent man with letters to post at Kulja.

August 26th.—The day started badly but improved, and later on the sun came out. I saw only two lots of ewes, but of course the men behind with my baggage (we shifted camp about seven miles in the direction of Karagay Tash), saw six karelini, which they said were shootable, and which I had passed in the mist when I first left camp. I noticed a place exactly like that made in England by a man digging out a rabbit burrow. I asked what this was, and was told it had been made by a hungry bear looking for a marmot. I hope he caught him.

August 27th.—A fine day. Went north and spied everywhere, but could only find some ibex. I shot the best of these for meat, as I had not had a shot since leaving the Pamirs. Being unable to get near, I guessed the range at 200 yards, but went low, and only got my beast (41½ inches) with the third shot, as he foolishly came towards me when disabled by my second. I then transferred my attentions to the next biggest ibex, which I hit through the middle. This beast lay down close, too, but on my pursuing made off, and reached the opposite side of a steep gully, which I could not cross. I expended no less than thirteen cartridges on finishing him, chiefly because my man, watching through a glass, kept telling me that my bullets were going high, the

fact being that, as often happens, what he took for the strike of the bullet was really a ricochet or stone, thrown up perhaps as much as five feet above where the bullet had really struck. The distance was actually about 300 yards. One ought, of course, not to shoot at an animal so far off, but, as it was only a question of finishing off a beast which could not go far, and there was no danger of wounding any other, no harm was done.

Rain again commenced about 6 P.M., and continued till I went to bed at 9.15 P.M.

August 28th.—I found nine holes in the skin of the second ibex; two were those of the bullet that killed him, and two were those of the first shot which hit him. I cannot account for the remaining five holes, which were all close together under his belly, unless a couple of shots, striking stones just underneath him, broke up and then ricocheted into him.

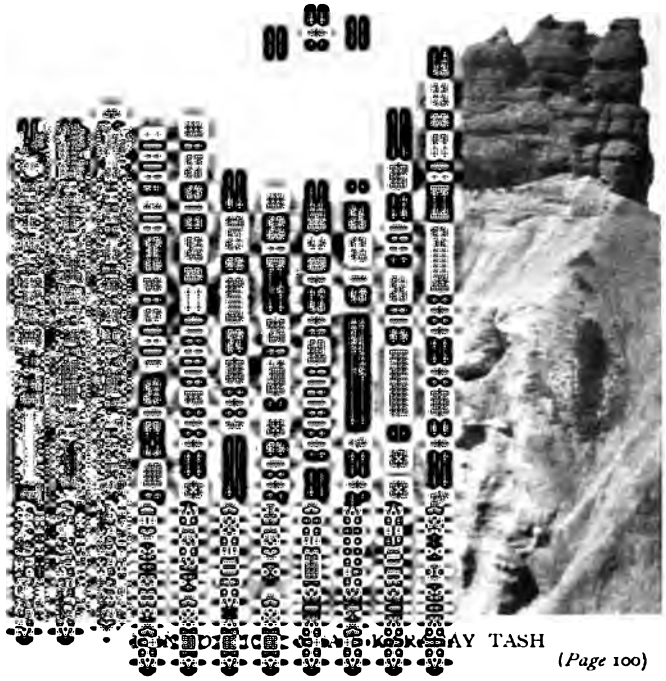
We started late again (about 10 A.M.) on account of the rain, and moved camp another seven miles towards the Karagay Tash (pronounced Kargatash). About 2 P.M. I set out from this new camp, but had no sooner reached the place I wanted to spy from when down came the clouds again, and nothing could be seen. We therefore returned to camp in a good wetting rain. On the way we found the skull and

backbone of a karelini some months dead; his longest horn (the tip of the other was broken off) measured 55½ inches. I wish I could manage to find and shoot one or two of that size. Elevation of camp, 8700 feet.

August 29th.—Clouds low all day, and rain most of the time, so it was useless to leave camp. Snow fell last night down to the 10,500 feet level. In the afternoon, too late to stalk, we saw some animals descending over the snows to the north. We hoped these were karelini, but Namgoon, on being sent to reconnoitre, reported they were all ibex.

August 30th.—It being a fine morning, we left camp at 6 A.M., and tried the hills to the south. During the first five hours I saw only a herd of ibex, and then, at 11 A.M., we came on a herd of seven karelini in a nullah. They either heard Namgoon or winded us, for they moved off at once. The first was a dark-, and the second a very light-coloured animal; both these two, and one other besides, seemed to carry nice heads. When they had vanished we followed, and I twice tried a stalk, but failed each time to get within range. They were very suspicious, and the wind, too, was very shifty, and may have caused their uneasiness. During my third stalk I was still separated from them by a deep nullah, when I suddenly saw them

PLATE 26



[illegible] AY TASH

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descending the opposite side of the nullah, coming towards me, but evidently bent on making off. I could not reach the side of the nullah in time to have a shot as they descended, so I ran to a rocky and very steep point which formed the "gate" by which the nullah debouched into the open. As I reached this I saw some karelini at the bottom rapidly departing, so, there being no time to use the glass, I followed the rule of "When in doubt shoot the leader," and sitting down put up my 200 yards sight and let drive. Greatly to my own surprise, I made a brilliant shot, and got him just below the heart.

I then turned my attention to the next, whom I luckily missed. Having now fired two shots, I suddenly saw on my side of the nullah, 100 yards below me, and about to gain a corner, the three biggest beasts. I had no time to alter my sights, but managed to shoot my dark friend through the backbone above the last rib (he was moving little faster than a walk); and then fired twice at the light-coloured one as he made rapid tracks down the hill. Abdul said I had hit him, but he went out of sight downhill in the direction of camp. We tracked him some distance but found no blood, and after spying all the likely places on our way home had to give up looking for him. The first one shot was only 39 inches.

I am sorry he got his death in the confusion. The second was 50 inches—a very fair head for a karelini.

It was now about 2.15, and, the ponies coming up, I had lunch—a small cutlet, about three spoonfuls of cold rice pudding, two slices of indifferent cake, and cold tea. When we had cut up the slain and rested somewhat, we started for camp, and before we got in at 4.30 P.M. I was the victim of a fit of indigestion—the result, I suppose, of bad cooking and hasty meals. The attack, however, luckily did not last long.

A karelini is very like a poli, except in regard to his horns, which are greenish, while those of poli are nearly white: a karelini's horns are also more deeply wrinkled, and thicker round the base than a poli's, though not so long.

Most of the time we had been stalking was spent above the snow-line, and though there was not much sun, the skin of my face peeled off again; it has already suffered in this way five or six times during the trip. Sunset was now about 6.30 P.M. Only one hailstorm came on to-day, and it lasted only two minutes, thank goodness!

August 31st.—Another fine day. Started out S.W. at 7.45. About two miles from camp we came on two "wild dogs" (*i.e.* wolves), at which I had a couple of long shots, the only result of which was

that I got a cut above the eye from the telescopic sight of my rifle. I believe I could have got nearer, but the shikaries said it was hopeless to try. About an hour afterwards, as we were ascending the slope at the head of the valley towards the gulja (sheep) ground, two illik (Siberian roe) got up in front of us. I went to try if I could see where they had gone, but having failed, returned to the ponies, which were standing on the top of a mound where two ridges met at right angles. I had sat down when suddenly, about 600 yards below us, I saw the two illik, which in the distance rather resembled gigantic hares, galloping towards us, the buck pursuing the doe.

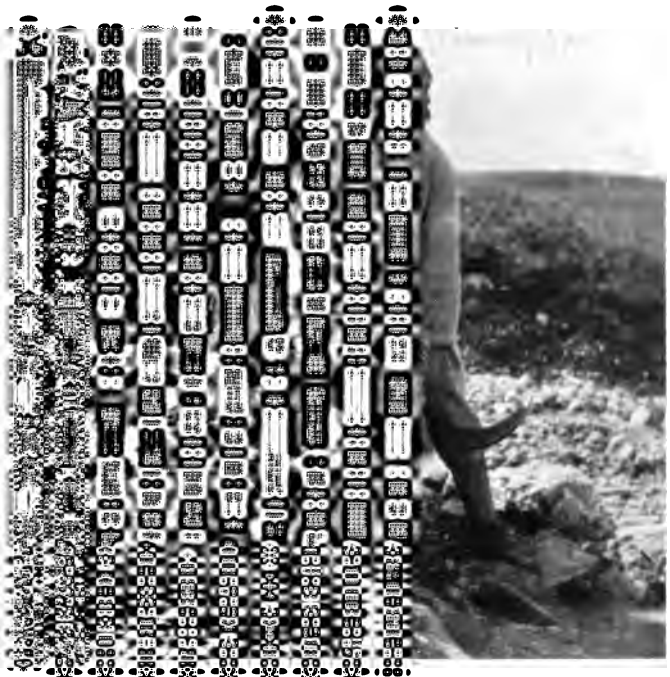
I ran to cut them off, and as they passed me at about 100 yards fired, and broke the buck's hind-foot to smithereens. He did not know what to make of this, and stopped about 120 yards away. My second shot missed, my third smashed his knee. Abdul did not want me to fire again, as we were near the gulja ground, but the buck was so active that he got out of sight, and we nearly lost him. Finally, I caught sight of him, lying with his head behind a rock about 100 yards from where I was. I thought I could not miss him, but my bullet went low, cut a furrow six inches along his belly, and smashed his other hind-foot. In spite of this third wound he made off again, but a bullet in the rump settled matters. His

horns, from burr round outside curve to tip, measured 13 inches, tip to tip 12½ inches, points 6.

I saw no guljas, but on my way home had another shot at a wolf. It was a fair chance, and I ought to have got him, but I misjudged the range, and only put my 200 yards sight up, so the bullet went low. I think he was really 300 yards away.

September 1st.—Another fine day. Started at 7.45 A.M., and went east. We had just struggled up to the top of our ground when we saw five guljas on some steep ground below us. We easily gained a ridge overlooking them, and I was persuaded by my shikaries to shoot at the biggest as he was lying down. I put up my 300 yards sight, and taking, as I thought, a very steady aim, fired. All the guljas at once sprang up, and galloped off. When out of range they went more slowly, and we watched them all going off apparently unhurt till they were hidden by a ridge nearly a mile away. From behind this ridge only four emerged, and the shikaries at once said that the big one, if not hit, would not have left the others. We made a long search, but saw no more of him, and I do not believe he was touched. I ought to have waited for my shot till the big ram got up.

As we were looking for the gulja a bear appeared. The wind was wrong, but as the shikari was keen to



KARELINI

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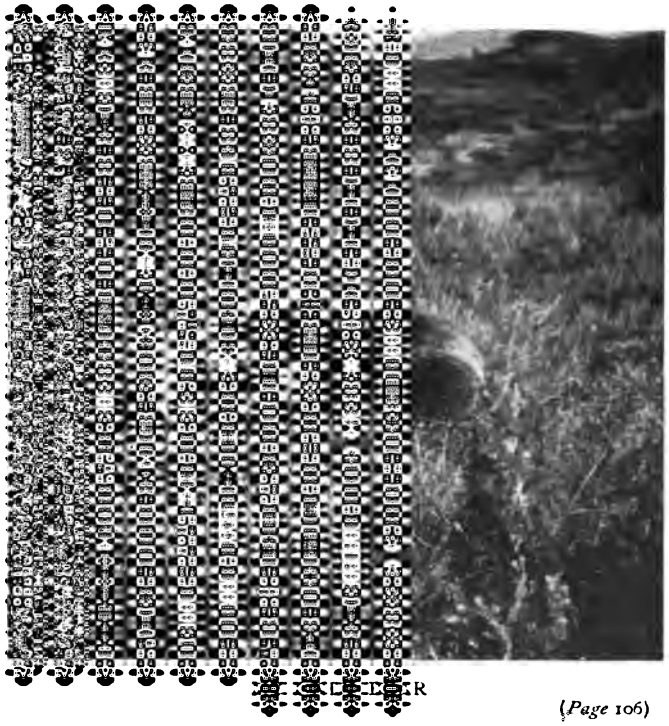

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get her, I said I would have a try. We accordingly started a stalk, but had only gone a quarter of a mile when I heard a shout from a man we had left behind to watch. I looked up, and saw the bear going across my front from left to right. I ran forward about 50 yards, and sat down on a hillock. As I did so the bear appeared, and stood a moment about 120 yards off, and above me. I fired at once, and down fell the bear (hole of entrance, inside of left shoulder; exit, point of left shoulder), but she was up again in a moment, and with the ground in her favour went off at a surprising pace. She came into view again within 80 yards, and got shot through the heart. She turned out to be partly grown.

September 2nd.—Started south about 8 A.M., and saw only some female guljas till about 12.45, when Namgoon spied some ibex "near," as he said—really some 2000 feet below. I decided to have a try, but told Arka that I did not see how he could get within 300 yards by the way he proposed going. However, we scrambled down some inconveniently steep shale slopes, and finally reached a spot overlooking the ibex. I found that I was expected to shoot from here, though the ibex were some 400 yards off, and my rifles are only sighted to 300 yards. I refused to fire, and told my men that I did not consider it sportsmanlike to fire at such ranges. However,

before we could make another stalk, the wind suddenly changed, and off went the ibex.

The sky had clouded over some time before, though the morning had been beautiful, and the rain now began to pour down. We climbed down to the bottom of the hill, and took shelter under some stones till the ponies arrived. The way in which the pony-man rode down this hill, which even on foot seemed steep to me, and led two other ponies as well, surprised me. We had a long ride back to camp, the rain pouring down steadily all the time: we reached camp about 6.40 P.M. I was not really wet through, as I had my mackintosh with me, but was glad to change into dry clothes. The men were fairly comfortable, as they had a fire inside their khourga to dry themselves. My sodden tent was not a very cheerful place on an evening like this, and I wished for an English fireside.

I think the Kalmucks have got an idea that, because I have killed at one or two rather long shots, I ought to get my beast every time at 300 yards. The fact is, I don't reckon a pot-shot at 200 yards as much more than six to four on, while 300 yards is nearer two to one against. It is, however, irritating to know that, when you have missed at 300 yards, you are looked on as having let go an easy chance.

September 3rd.—Started about 10 A.M., when the

clouds had lifted a little, and went east, but about 1.30 P.M. down they came again, and it began to snow. We saw nothing, though we went over the watershed towards the Yulduz Valley. Yulduz is pronounced Juldoo.

September 4th.—Started when the weather cleared about noon, and went south. Saw a good "illik," but did not get a shot at him. Stalked a wolf who was busy hunting for field-mice, and thought I had him, as I got to about 150 yards from him, but I managed to loose off my rifle before I had quite got my aim, and only cut some hair off his belly. The wolf gave a howl, and jumped about three feet in the air, but though he ran across my front at about 100 yards, and I fired four more shots at him as he went, I never touched him again. My luck and "eye" seem to be out to-day.

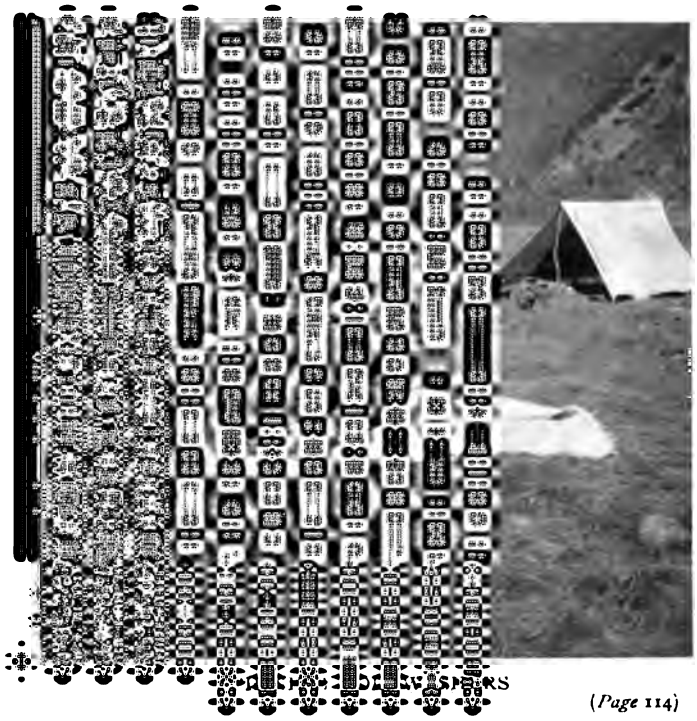
On the way home, close by the water, and not more than three-quarters of a mile from camp, we came on the skeleton of a gulja whose head measured 56 inches; the brain was quite fresh, and we found a piece of skin about 3 feet by 18 inches with the hair still on; it had a hole in the middle of it which might have been the exit-hole of a bullet. My Kalmucks said it had not been dead more than five days. I think this was the ram Abdul said I had wounded, but which we could not find, on August 30th. His

dying here would also account for our seeing so many wolves.

Gulja do not at this season come down so low as this, and therefore are unlikely to be killed by wolves or snow-leopards here. On the other hand, I did not, on August 30th, myself think I had hit a third gulja, or that there was a 56-inch one in that herd, nor have I ever known an animal hit in the body with the .350 get away. I wonder whether this old fellow had chosen this, the "fat" season of the year, in which to die a natural death, instead of the "lean" time (February or March) usually favoured.

September 5th.—A disastrous day. Started at 7 A.M., and went east. At about 11.30, as I was descending a valley which we had previously "spied," I suddenly saw the big gulja whom I had missed on the 1st, strolling along the other side of the valley. He must have been lying hidden all the time. As we were out especially to look for him, we went in the direction he had taken, but, of course, did not see him again.

After looking for this gulja a long time, we at length tried a distant valley, and as we advanced cautiously over the brow, I spotted two fine guljas lying down about half a mile off. We tried to stalk from above, but the wind would not serve, so had to try to get round below. As we went, we stumbled



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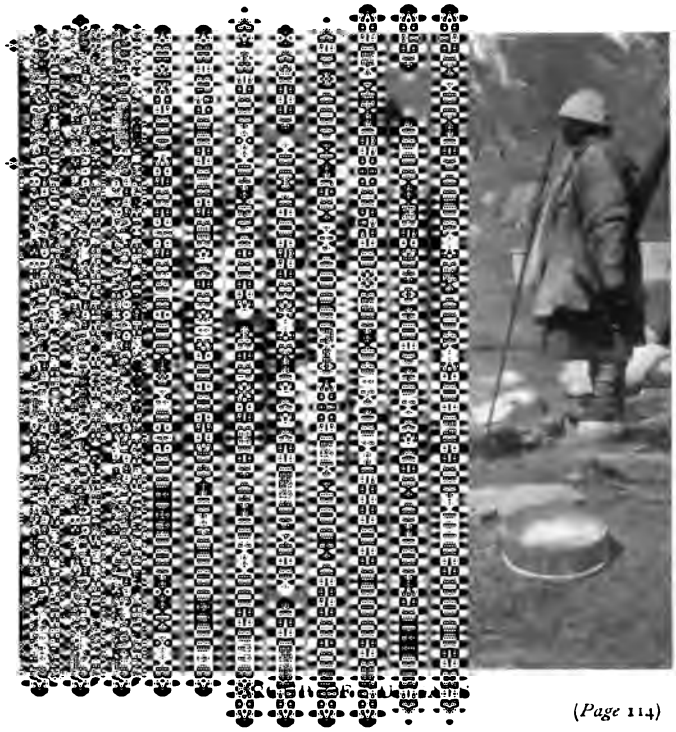

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on seven other guljas which had been lying behind a rise, and their flight aroused the suspicions of the others, who now got up, and were, we found, really five in number. However, we got within shot, and I judged the distance 300 yards (it was really 230 yards) and fired. The shot was so bad for elevation that I saw it strike below the feet of the animal I fired at, instead of going high as it should have done. Two more ineffective shots shattered my confidence in my shooting. What on earth is the matter with me? or can anything be wrong with the rifle or ammunition?

I reached camp in the dark at 8 P.M., and found that my postman had returned from Kulja, but that no letters or papers had arrived there for me. He brought a present of apples and grapes, but they had naturally gone bad on the road.

I have now only one or two more days to spare in looking for the guljas; and either or both may be spoiled by clouds; moreover, guljas are hard to find. It is annoying.

September 6th.—Fired six shots at 200 yards at a target with an 8-inch bull. Three hit the bull, and the other three were from one to three inches low; all six might have hit a saucer. The rifle, it seems, does shoot low, but only about four inches—not enough to account for my misses!

Started out north again about 8 A.M., but saw

only some wolves (a stalk failed on account of their restless habits), and some female and small male guljas; camp had been shifted two hours' march up-stream, close to the head of the nullah, and I got in at 6.40 P.M.

September 7th.—Started at 7.15. Saw two fine rams and tried to stalk them, but having got within 500 yards we could get no further. The shikari insisted on trying a way round which involved climbing over a shoulder of the mountain some 1000 yards from the guljas, and exposing ourselves to view for 30 yards. The rams did see something and got up, and when we disturbed some females just the other side of the shoulder the big rams "twigged" what was in the air, and, standing not on the order of their going, went. We looked for them a long time, but saw nothing, and at last reached camp (7.20 P.M.). Both Arka and I fell into a bog in the dark, while Abdul, who was three-quarters of an hour behind, had a fall on a steep place.

September 8th.—A good deal of snow had fallen during night, so we did not start till 10 A.M., and then went south. We saw an illik which the shikaries put up, some ibex, and female guljas. Returned to camp at 4.45 P.M.

September 9th.—Started at 6.50 A.M., and went east. Saw two, and then four rams, and finally four

big ones. Stalked these latter, but could only get to about 300 yards. As a storm was brewing and the clouds coming down I sent Arka to move them, but they moved straight uphill instead of towards me, and the light being now very bad (3.15 P.M.), I did not even fire a farewell shot at the big one, who was last. We got back to camp at 6.40 P.M.

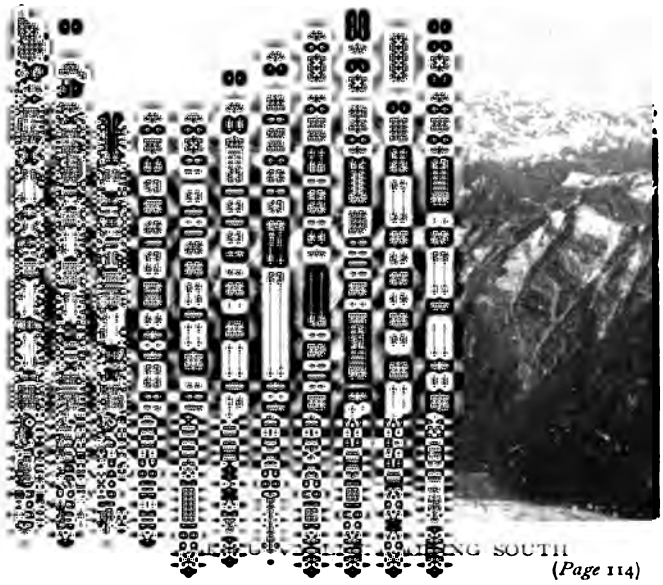
September 10th.—I had intended to march to-day towards the wapiti ground, but it snowed so hard till noon that I could not move camp. I went to spy in the evening, when there was a foot of snow on the ground, and saw one buck and two doe illik (roe) on the south side of the valley.

September 11th.—Marched at 8.5 A.M. to camp about 15 miles lower down the Kok Su River. Went out to look for roe, but only saw three small—very small—wapiti stags and four hinds. It snowed gently a good part of the day. Elevation of camp, 8000 feet.

September 12th.—Marched at 8.10 A.M., and camped about 10 miles further down the river. This seems a short march, but we encountered an obstacle in a shape of a gorge, and so had to climb over a shoulder some 2000 feet high, from which we again descended to the river, finally camping at the junction of the Kreng Su and Kok Su streams at an elevation of 7500 feet, so that we

really covered quite a long distance. On the way, just before we had to ascend this shoulder, we came on a little camp beside the river. This was inhabited by some bastard Chinese called Tungāns. They had come from the direction of Kuchar, and were washing for gold in the Kok Su River. They said that they had got very little gold, but showed me a few grains, perhaps a couple of sovereigns worth. The Tungāns are curious people, and according to Church's book are supposed to be descended from some Chinese soldiers who turned Mohammedans to save their lives at the time of the great rebellion. At 3 P.M. we crossed the Kok Su, and went on foot up the steep, jungle-covered slopes on the far side of the river in the hopes of finding a wapiti. However, we saw nothing but the tracks of a bear, and so returned to camp at 6.30 P.M.

September 13th.—Started at 8 A.M., and camped only eight miles down stream, but had to travel over a very difficult bit of road, again crossing a high shoulder. On reaching the top we were, however, rewarded for our exertions by some magnificent views. In the foreground of the first illustration is the end of the shoulder we had to cross: far below, out of sight, between it and the hills in the middle distance, the Kok Su



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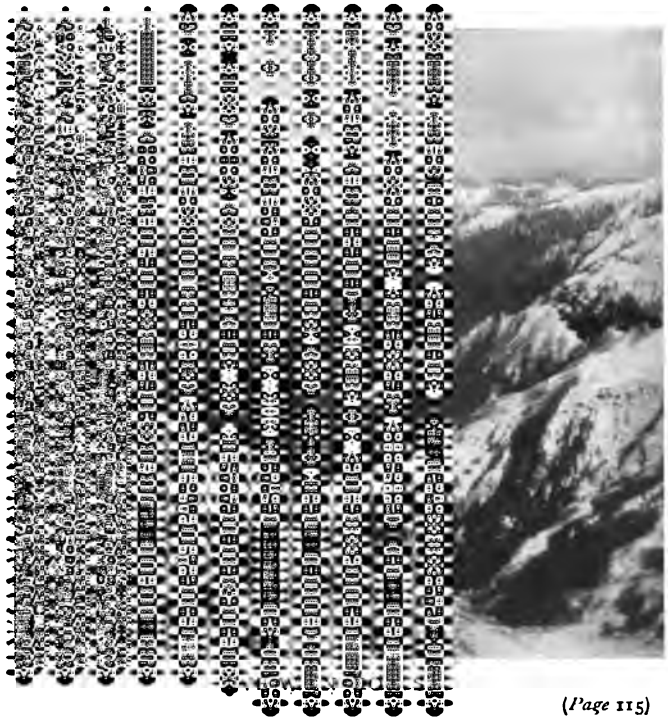

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River runs from left to right, while in the distance are the mountains which form the barrier between Illi and the deserts of the Tarim basin.

The second illustration is taken looking west down the valley of the Kok Su. This stream comes from behind the minor ridge in the left-hand bottom corner of the picture, and when it reaches the mountains in the distance turns at right angles to the right (north) through a gap in the mountain wall which divides its upper portion from the main Tekkes Valley, and joins the main stream, which at this latter point is flowing east. The dark patches above the stream on its left-hand side are the pine forests which form the principal haunts of the wapiti, while the slopes on the left are for the most part bare of trees, and are favourite ground for ibex.

It follows from this that the best way of spying the forest is from the opposite slopes, but as these are steep, and the Kok Su difficult to cross, it may not be possible to make your stalk till the day after you have seen your stag!

Leaving the ponies in camp here, we walked on to look for wapiti, but only saw some hinds, a small stag, and a lot of tracks.

September 14th.—The river now being too deep to ford, and the hills being so steep that we can

go no distance either up or down stream without the toil of a regular march, we spent half a day in making a bridge. Arka, who did nearly all the work, fell in the water, on the right of the boulder in the centre, and might easily have been drowned, but luckily he caught hold of one of the poles of which we were forming the bridge as he fell, and thus was able to haul himself out.

At 2 P.M. we went up the hill northwards, and saw a small stag. Arka, going to the next ridge, spied a good stag, but he was far down the valley.

September 15th.—Left camp at 5.45 A.M. Swam the ponies across the river, crawled over the bridge, and rode to the top of the first ridge, half-way up it, putting up a fine covey of partridges on our way. Here we left the ponies, and at 7.45 went on on foot up the top of the ridge, here only a few feet wide, nearly up to its junction with the main hill. Ihr Jan, who could by means of a hollow reed make a very passable imitation of the call of a wapiti, now tried what he could do, and before long got answers from two stags.

At about 11 A.M. I started to stalk one of these invisible stags. Arka took me to the far side of the second ridge from camp, from which we spied two small stags; and then, as our stag continued calling, we proceeded nearly to the bottom of the first

nullah to look for him. At last he appeared, but he was not big, a mere ten-pointer, so we left him and went on the crest of the next ridge. Here at last (about 4.0 P.M.) we heard another stag call, the noise he made sounding like something between a neigh and a roar. As he kept on calling we cautiously descended towards the sound, till at last Arka caught sight of him about 60 yards off. I sat down in order to be able to see him under the branches, and though from this position I could not see his head I fired. The ground was so steep that when I sat down I could not prevent myself sliding down the hill, and so managed to miss this chance, which sounds such an easy one. I fired my second barrel into the bush behind which he had vanished, and then ran down the hill after him as fast as I could. When I reached the place where he had been, Arka showed him to me about 200 yards off, just disappearing behind some trees.

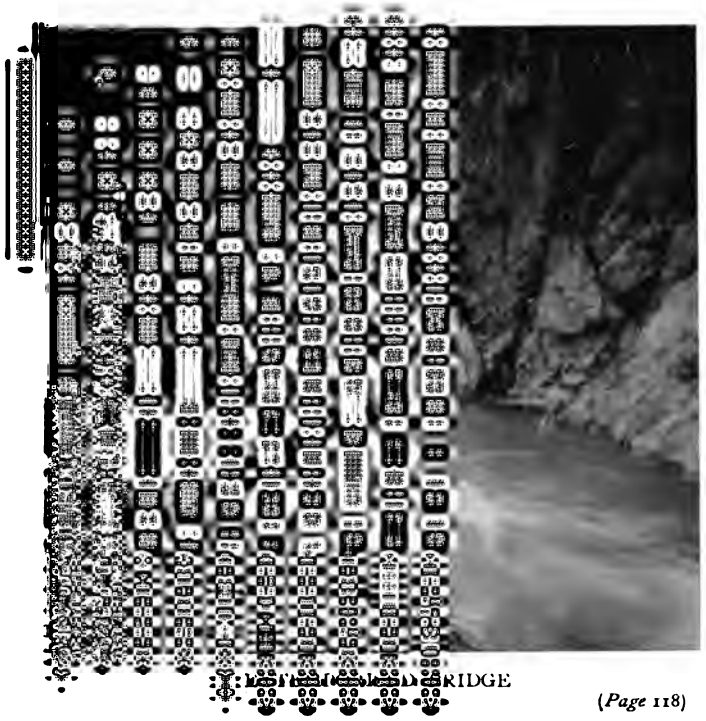
My third shot went low, but I saw him stagger as I fired my left barrel, and his near hind-leg seemed to give way, but he vanished among the trees. We made our way as fast as we could to the place where we had seen him last, and found a copious blood track.

This we followed for about a mile and a half through the jungle and over some very steep

ground till we lost it in the stream at the bottom of the nullah. It was now after 5 P.M., and would soon be dark, so I sorrowfully gave up the chase for the time being and started back.

We had to ascend to the top of the ridge from which the stag had been calling when we first heard him, descend the far side, and then climb a still higher ridge to where we had left our ponies. It was quite dark when we got half-way up this last, but at last we stumbled on to the top. By this time it was about 7.0 P.M., and as I had had no food (except a piece of chocolate, which I always carry for these emergencies) since leaving camp, I felt I had had about enough walking. I lay down by the fire which Abdul and Ihr Jan had lit, and finding some whisky and some milk in my lunch-basket, drank a little mixed fairly stiff, and felt better for it. I gave what was left to Arka, who, being a Buddhist, had no scruples either about drinking spirits or using a mug after me, and who lapped up what was left to the last drop.

We now had to descend the hill up which we had ridden in the morning, and though there was a moon a week old it was no pleasant job. The worst part of the whole business was crossing our extemporised bridge. First we had to clamber over boulders at the water's edge for 200 yards or more,



RIDGE

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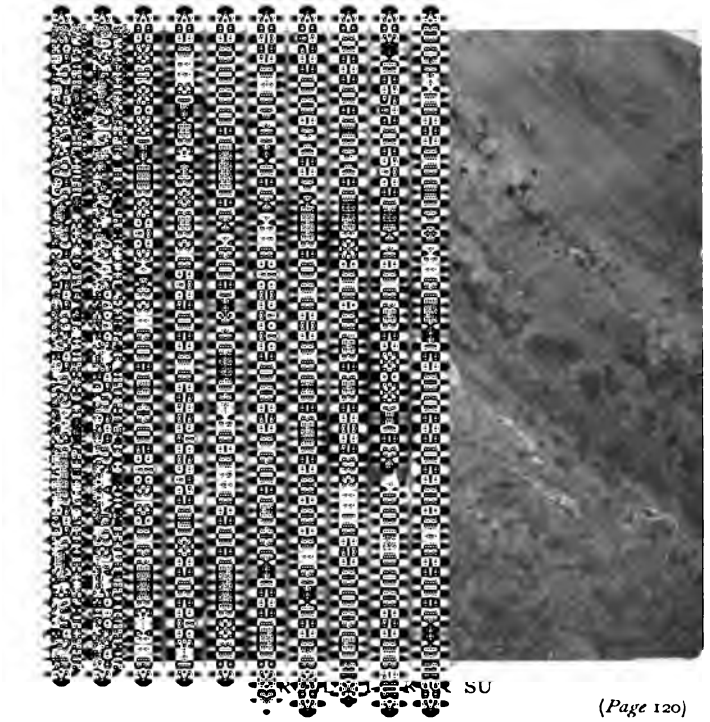

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then crawl over the "bridge" (two or three fir-poles), which was now very slippery with frozen spray. As falling into the water meant getting drowned, I had a rope tied round my waist while I crossed, the other end being held by a man on shore. Once across there was a very steep climb for about 100 feet to reach level ground. I scrambled up this on my hands and knees, and was very glad of some assistance from my rope in getting to the top. When at last I reached camp it was 9 P.M.

Abdul, who had remained with the ponies, somewhat revived my spirits by telling me that Ihr Jan had watched the stag through my telescope, and had seen him cross the river near where we had given him up and lie down looking very sick. Abdul prophesied that we should get him next day.

September 16th.—Left camp at 8.40 A.M., and traversed a very bad road. About noon we passed a man who was bringing me some stores; he was riding one pony and leading another. Ihr Jan, who had been following the stag on foot, joined us at 2.30 and said he had tracked the stag, who was dragging one leg behind him, into some very bad ground. I saw I could not go over this ground, but Abdul, Ihr Jan, and Namgoon volunteered to try, so I returned to camp and sent them out some supplies.

As Arka and I were retracing our steps over the road we had come in the morning (I would not ride over it, though Arka did), we came on a Kazak dismounted, who turned out to be the man we had met; but alas! his two ponies, which were carrying some rice for my men and oil for my camp lamp, had both fallen off the track and gone down the khud (steep hillside). One pony was recovered, but the other had broken his back. My oil (which I had brought from Srinagar) and the rice had fallen into the Kok Su and were lost.

September 17th.—Struck out northwards at 5.55, and saw some ibex about 7.30: we started to stalk them, and got within range, but Arka, being too impatient, went on and was seen. The ibex all bolted, and I fired at the one I thought the biggest in the herd and missed him, but hit another. When my rifle was empty, the biggest beast of the lot, who carried a really fine head, came lumbering into view alone and behind the others. Had my rifle been loaded I could hardly have missed him, but just as I had stuffed a fresh cartridge into the right barrel of my rifle (.360) and brought it to my shoulder, he disappeared over the ridge. We found the small ibex —I may have mistaken his body for that of one with better horns, or may have simply "shot at the pigeon and killed the crow"—hanging by his horns

from a rock as if suspended in a butcher's shop. He had been hit through the heart, and the bullet had mushroomed splendidly.

We saw nothing more all day, except a small wapiti on the far side of the nullah and a large herd of female ibex. On the way home it rained heavily. The Kazak, who came with us to carry my lunch, rode over ground which I myself could hardly cross on foot! At 7.30 a message reached camp from the men who were in pursuit of the wounded stag to the effect that he had gone into Kreng Su on three legs, and that Namgoon had shot at him but had not brought him down.

September 18th.—Starting about 10 A.M., I spied a good stag on the opposite side of the nullah and went after him. After some trouble and waste of time we found "a ford" across the river, which was up to the edge of the numnah under my saddle. I got up to the stag, but could see nothing but his horns, and before I could ascertain where his body was in order to shoot, he got our wind and fled. Arka tracked him a long way as he twisted and turned on the hill, but I never got another view of him in the jungle, and we finally had to give him up.

I got my lunch at 5 P.M., and so was much better off than last time.

September 19th.—Left camp at about 6.15 A.M., and got up to the ground where I had fired at the stag on the 15th. I saw nothing up to 10.30, and then it began to snow hard. We sheltered under a tree till 12.30, and then returned to camp.

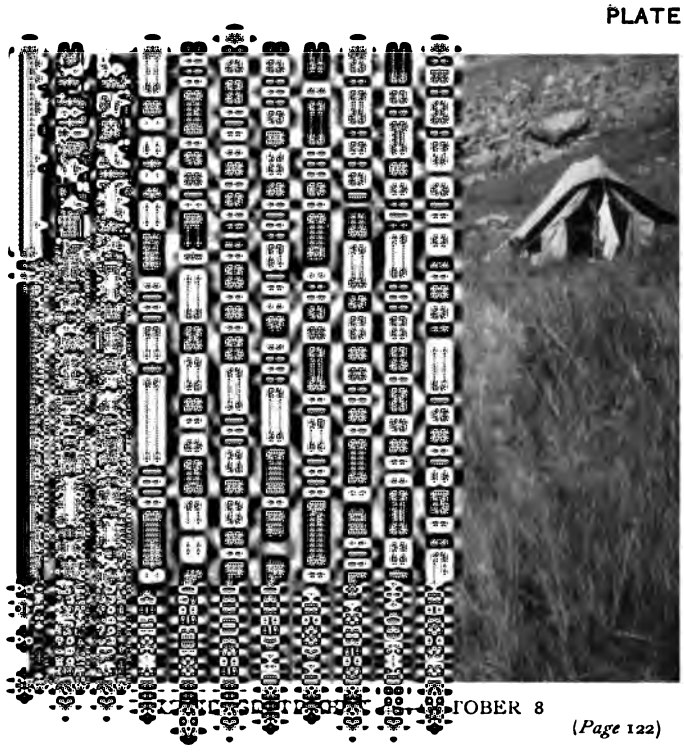
Abdul and the two shikaries got back to camp without having secured the wounded stag, who, they said, was very bad and sure to die in a day or two, so I gave orders to send news of him, and a promise of a reward if they brought me his head, to the Tungāns, who were encamped close to where the tracks of the stag were lost, and who wanted meat.

September 20th.—Shifted camp about five miles down stream, but owing to the steepness of the slopes, the baggage ponies had to make such a long detour that they were nearly nine hours on the march.

I left camp about 7 A.M., crossed the ground I had tried on the 17th, and "spied" a nullah beyond, in which we saw some stags, but they proved too small. Our new camp was at the junction of this nullah and the main nullah. We got in about 6.30 P.M. (elevation, 6900 feet).

September 21st.—This morning I discovered that all my Kazaks had bolted during the night, taking the best riding ponies with them. What had upset them apparently was the prospect of having to carry

PLATE 31



OCTOBER 8

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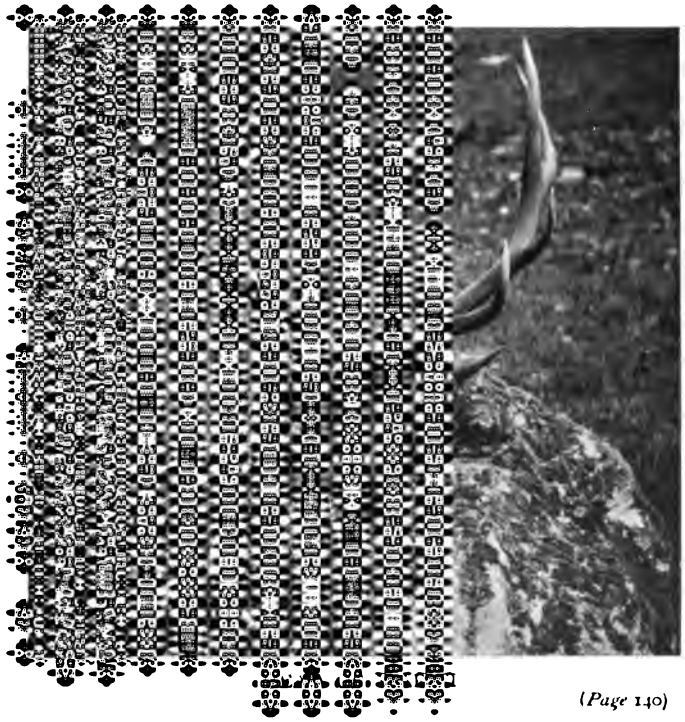

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a few light things up a hill, up which ponies could not get, to a place where I proposed to bivouac for the night. In consequence of this we did not get started till about 8 A.M.

We went on foot up the hill opposite camp, and heard a stag call; but though Arka and I scrambled about for a long time looking for him, our search was in vain.

I sent Habiballah to Kara Jung for fresh men and more ponies.

September 22nd.—Left camp at 6.15. I went out on the hill down-stream, but saw nothing but some fresh tracks and a few hinds, and returned at 5 P.M. I feel rather dispirited at the small results achieved by so much labour, for it is very hard work getting up and down these high and steep places, and I have now been after wapiti for eleven days without success. During this time I have fired but once, and then bungled getting a good stag, and I have only been within range of a stag on one other occasion.

September 23rd.—I did not go out early, as the clouds were down; but at 3 P.M. went up the nullah to the south behind camp, as Namgoon said he had seen fresh tracks of a stag leading into it. Nothing was there but some ibex, a long way off, but from the top of the ridge Arka spied a stag

about half a day's march off, near the top of the ridge on the other side of the main valley.

September 24th.—Worse and worse. Left camp at 4.15 to look for the stag we spied yesterday. Having struggled to the top of the hill, we saw from here a small stag of ten points. I decided to stalk and shoot him as a *pis aller*, but he had other views, and did not wait. My Kalmucks were always inclined to go ahead too fast, without examining the ground in front of them with sufficient care, and as they could move much faster than I could through the jungle which covered the steep face of this ridge, I could not always stop them. To-day, as I was toiling after them through the jungle, making for a point on the top of the ridge which appeared to be a good place to spy from, a smothered exclamation from Ihr Jan made me look back, and there I saw a good stag, probably the one we had come to look for, just disappearing over the crest of the ridge.

A further annoyance was, however, still in store. The shikaries reached the top of the ridge ahead of me as usual, and instead of cautiously peering over it until they were sure that there was nothing on the far side, incautiously showed themselves on the sky-line.

I saw that something had happened, and put my best foot foremost, but was only in time to see a flock of ibex, some of which appeared to have really gigantic horns, about 500 yards away, retiring in good order.

The ridge we were on is a spur from the mountains to the south of the Kok Su River. It is shaped like a razor, the edge of which varies from 2000 to 4000 feet above the back, ascending as it recedes from the river. The edge of this razor, or summit of the ridge, is for two or three miles rarely more than six feet, and often not two feet, wide on the top. The slope facing north is not quite so steep as that facing south, and is covered, as is always the case in this country, with bushes and fir trees. On the other hand the slope facing south, which was where the ibex were, is very steep indeed, and where it is not perpendicular rock is covered with grass. Trees and bushes never grow on the south slopes of the hills. The whole country is a mass of similar spurs, all of which spring from one or other of the two main mountain chains, which are separated from one another by the valley of the Kok Su.

When we had gone a couple of miles further on, Abdul, who was spying at the time, said he saw a snow-leopard, but by the time I had got

my glasses on the spot he had disappeared, leaving, alas! no address.

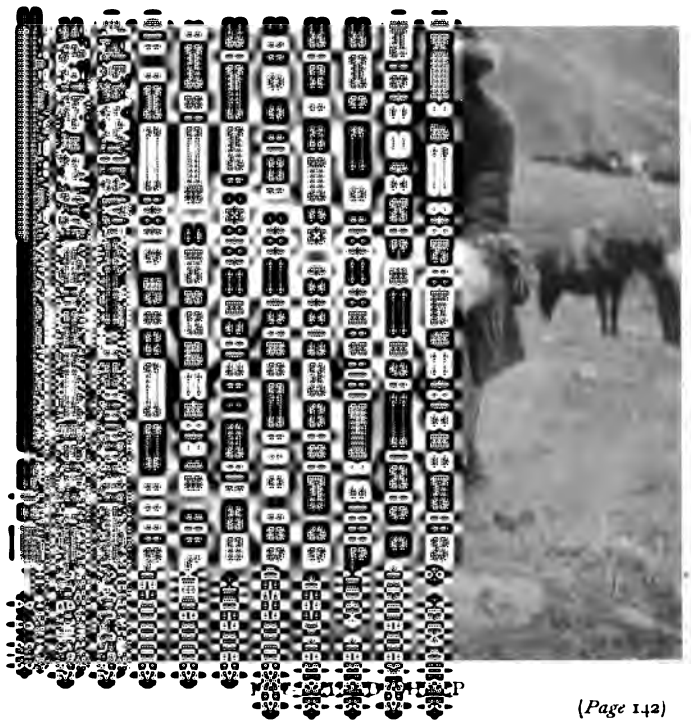
The road to this place tried me severely, as I hate steep places, and it was as much as I could do to climb up along the razor-topped ridge, as it had an almost perpendicular drop on both sides in many places. We stayed for some time near the spot from which Abdul had viewed the snow-leopard, and also went again to look after the ibex, but without success. We saw only a small wapiti stag and two hinds.

When we started for camp about 3.45 P.M. it began to rain, wetting me to the skin, and making the steep overgrown paths on the side of the hill even more unpleasant than in the morning. It was quite dark when we reached our ponies, and I did not reach my tent till 7.15 P.M.

September 25th.—The dawn now begins to appear about 4.45, but the sun does not rise above the hills till 6.30 A.M. As the clouds were low I did not go out till they lifted at 11.30 A.M. As soon as I had got a short way up the hill the clouds came down again, so we lit a fire and waited till 3.30 P.M., when we concluded the day's outing and returned to camp.

September 26th.—Went out at 6.25 to look for ibex, but saw a wapiti stag who disappeared into

PLATE 32



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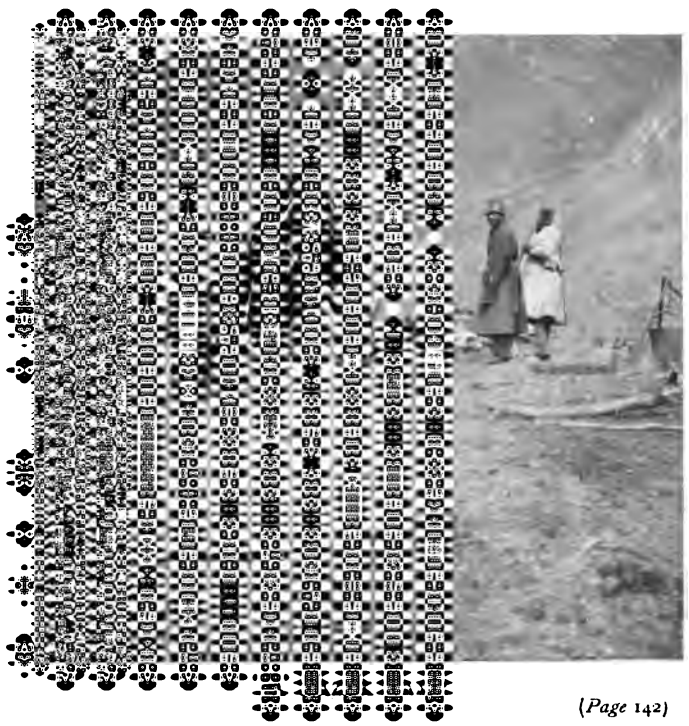

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a small nullah. Having gone a long way round to look for him, we spied two large stags and some others in a small patch of jungle in this nullah. Arka and I made a stalk and reached a place about 150 yards from one of the good stags, but he was lying down, and I could only see his head and neck. After missing the karelini when lying down, I would not risk the shot, so I settled down to wait till he got up. In the meantime, however, Namgoon and Ihr Jan, who had been told to watch two of the exits from this patch of jungle which I could not see, began to *honk* (beat) the place, and did not even beat in my direction, but straight uphill. Of course the good stag vanished like a ghost by the only route I did not command, and a small stag which I did not think worth shooting broke close to me. This *contretemps* was very annoying after all the labour I have had, but I am afraid the shikaries did not understand the impromptu speech I made to them.

September 27th.—Left camp at 7.55 and went in the direction of the nullah towards which the wapiti fled yesterday. I met some Kazaks who had been sent from Kara Jung to replace those who had deserted making their way to camp, and saw a herd containing some good ibex, but in an unapproachable position, where we had to leave

them. I had a long walk back, the latter part of which was over bad ground and in the dark, and finished the day with a ride over a bad road into camp. I found a letter there waiting for me which had arrived from India *viâ* England, but nothing from home.

September 28th.—I sent Ihr Jan out again by himself, with orders to look for the head of the stag I had wounded on the 15th. I left camp about 11 A.M., taking a shelter-tent with me. This we pitched about three miles up the river on the far side, crossing a rather awkward ford which Namgoon found yesterday. I went up the hill (south) and spied the small nullah behind camp. Starting about 2 P.M., we returned about 5.40 P.M., having seen only a few female ibex.

September 29th.—Left camp at 6.30 A.M., and went up the hill behind camp, but much higher than last night, and spied the big nullah. We reached the top of the ridge at 8, but the mist in the nullah did not clear till nearly 9. As there was nothing visible in the big nullah we went along the top of the ridge to spy the small nullah, and found there was one good ram with the females we had seen yesterday. We had an easy stalk, and I had a shot downhill at about 180 yards: my first barrel went low and the second high, and

the big fellow gave no more chances. Some small ibex, not being able to make us out, came uphill quite close to us. From here Abdul returned to last night's bivouac to take the things we had left there back to our main camp.

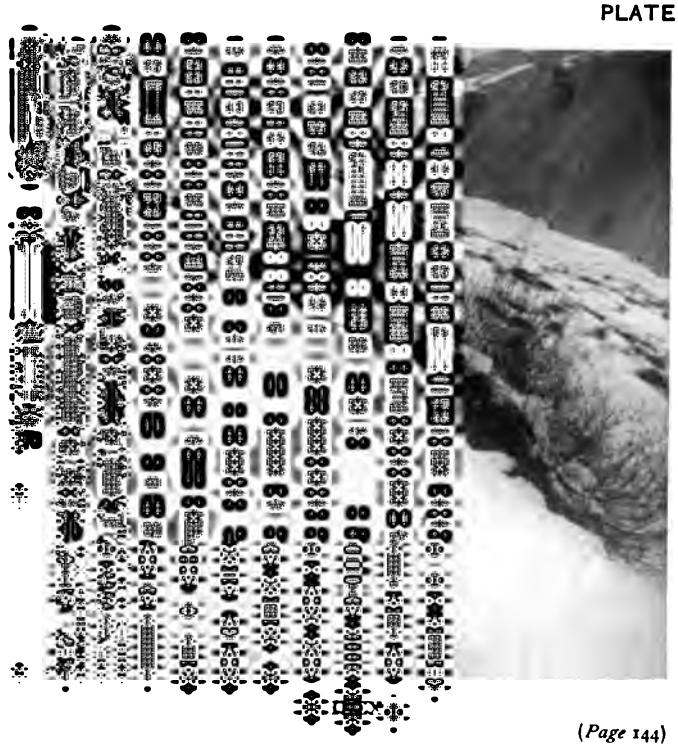
Arka, Namgoon, and I went on, and, crossing the two small intervening nullahs, reached the ridge of the big nullah, which is behind the ridge opposite our camp, where we had seen the ibex on the 24th. Arka spotted some ibex at once. They were lying down close under the ridge, which is very steep. We had an easy stalk, and got to a rock just over the biggest ibex, and only about 40 yards from him. About 6 feet below me was a projecting rock which partly screened the ibex from me, and when I fired, as I did not lean over quite enough, my bullet hit this instead of the ibex. I fired again at him as he fled alone towards the top of the nullah, and twice at the others as they went in the opposite direction, but quite without effect. The first ibex, however, when he had gone 300 yards, stopped, and turned to look back. I fired again, and he moved as if hit, but got on to a rock still facing me. My left barrel brought him headlong off the rock, and he slid down the slope below.

I thought he was dead, and went after the

others. I saw these (or rather Arka showed them to me) standing on the face of a very difficult piece of ground about 260 yards off. I lay down to shoot, but the slope was so steep I could not keep myself steady. The ibex now began to move to the top of the steep ridge they were standing on, which was some 30 yards above them. I fired twice at the blackest but missed him, and twice more at two others as they came on the sky-line, hitting one. Arka followed them over the bad place while I went round the other side of the hill, sending Namgoon to "hallal" No. 1.

By the time I had got round to the "neck" at the other side, I could see nothing of Arka or the ibex, so climbed to the top of the small peak, round which I had come to see if Namgoon had "hallaled" No. 1. I could see neither at first, but at last Namgoon appeared and told me by signs that he had been unable to catch the ibex, which, though very sick indeed, had made off. Arka also now appeared at the neck to which I had first gone, and beckoned to me to come down. He told me (by signs) that I had hit an ibex, who was somewhere down the ridge below me. I could see some ibex feeding far down the slope, but Arka also pointed to the highest peak of the ridge close in front of us, saying "tekka" (ibex).

PLATE 33



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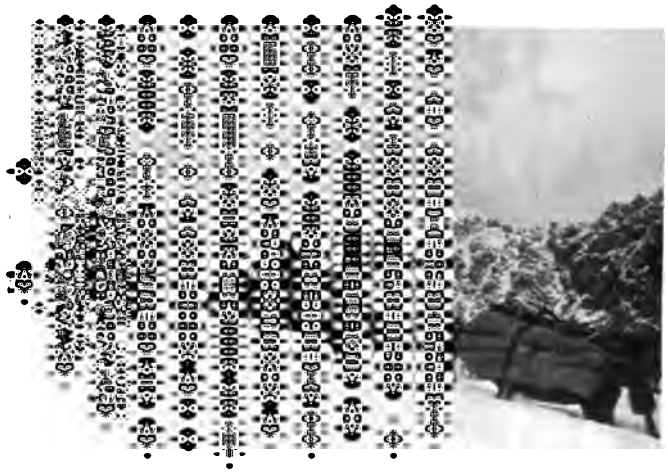

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I could not quite make out what he wanted, but coming to a ridge of the peak, I saw from his manner that something was close by, and taking the rifle crawled to the edge. Looking up, I saw five of the ibex on a little bit of grass close by the top, 80 yards off, and at once recognised my old black friend. I fired at him, but to my disgust he went towards the top, partly screened by a smaller beast. I fired again, over the back of the other ibex, but apparently without effect. However, just as he got within five feet of the top of the grass slope he was on, he faltered, began to lie down, and then fell, rolling down (the slope was quite practicable even to me) some 200 feet. Both bullets had hit in good places behind the shoulder, but one was rather low, and the other about four inches too far back. I was rather disappointed with this ibex, as his horns only measured 49 inches. He would have been a very big beast in Kashmir, but is only moderate in Illi. I fired fourteen shots this day—very bad shooting!

It was now getting late, but the Kalmucks spent some time cutting up the ibex, and I could not explain to them that they ought to hurry. I was wearing a thinnish suit, Abdul had taken my sweater back with him, and I had no overcoat, so had little inclination to spend the night up where we

then were, as the cold after sunset was severe. At last, at 5 P.M., we started for camp. Arka carried the ibex's head, Namgoon the tiffin-basket and a load of fat and flesh, while I carried the rifle. Before it got dark we crossed two bad places, over which I had to be helped, but which Arka negotiated carrying the ibex's head and the rifle as one load.

We went along the top of the ridge most of the way. These ridges are about three feet to four feet broad on the top as a rule, and generally have very steep but practicable grass slopes on each side. This one, however, is a bad one, and has a sheer precipice on one side for some distance, and at several points has peaks which are precipitous on both sides. However, by 6.15, when it got quite dark, we were on the broader and easier part of the ridge, and at 7.30 we had descended some way into the pine wood opposite camp.

Here we halted some time while the Kalmucks lit fires. I wanted them to go on as soon as they got a light, but could not make them understand. We set some whole fir trees 70 feet or 80 feet high alight. They made a magnificent blaze as the fire rushed up them. The Kalmucks did some cooking in a smaller fire, each cutting off about 2 lbs. of ibex fat and flesh and throwing it into the fire.

When this was burnt apparently to a cinder, they raked it out of the fire and ate it in great chunks.

About 9.30 we started off again. We could hear the shouts of our Kazaks, who were down by the river, and see some fires they had lighted, but could not see our own way. We travelled down a gully which was exceedingly steep, and full of brushwood, and until about 11.30, when the moon rose and a little light came into the sky, it was pitch dark. This part of the road took us from 9 P.M. till midnight to traverse. I went most of the way in a sitting position, while the men in front of me did the same. Arka, who was leading, kept throwing stones in front of him, so taking "soundings" to know if there were any precipices to be avoided. Now and then I slid until I collided with Namgoon, who was immediately in front of me, and who, as I had good cause to know, was carrying a savoury load of ibex fat on his back. We reached the river and our ponies at 12.30 A.M. and camp at 1 A.M. By the time I had had something to eat and had got into bed it was 2 o'clock in the morning.

I looked afterwards at the gully down which we had come in the dark, and which by daylight one could plainly see opposite camp, and discovered it had a precipice on each side. We ought to

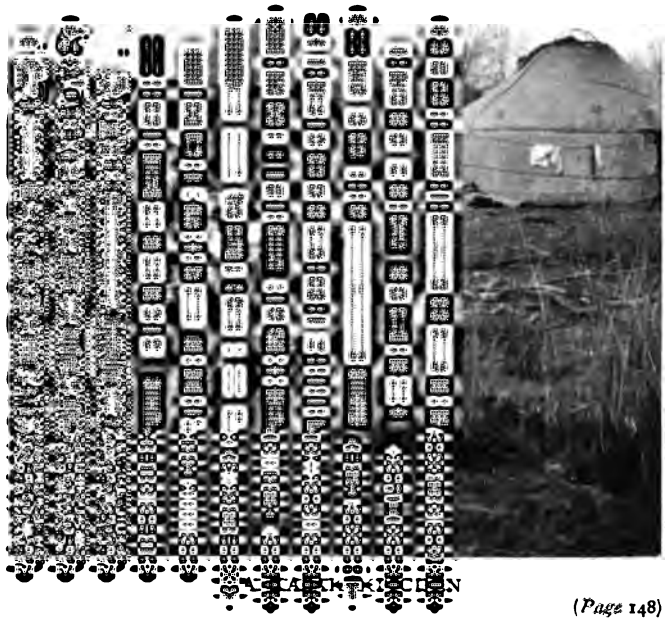
have gone further along the top of the ridge before beginning to descend, as the ground is less dangerous further on.

September 30th.—I was unable to "face the music" again at daylight, and stayed in camp, sleeping till 9 A.M., but Abdul, who had not had a hard day, and the two Kalmucks, started out to bring in the wounded about 7 A.M. They returned about twelve hours later, bringing with them the head of the ibex I called "No. 1." They had found him very sick, they said, but not dead. He had been hit through the body, a little too far back, and another bullet had hit him on the horn, but luckily had not broken it. Arka tried to finish him with the .350, and hit him in the fetlock, and then they caught him. His horns measured 54½ inches, or 53⅛ inches according to Rowland Ward. The other wounded ibex they tracked down to the bottom of the nullah, but did not get him, as it was then growing late.

My shikar knife, which the old keeper at home got for me when I was a boy, and which I must have had for fifteen years, fell out of its sheath as Namgoon was carrying it last night, and got lost.

I had been very much amused a few days before to see Arka and Ihr Jan shaving each other's heads

PLATE 34



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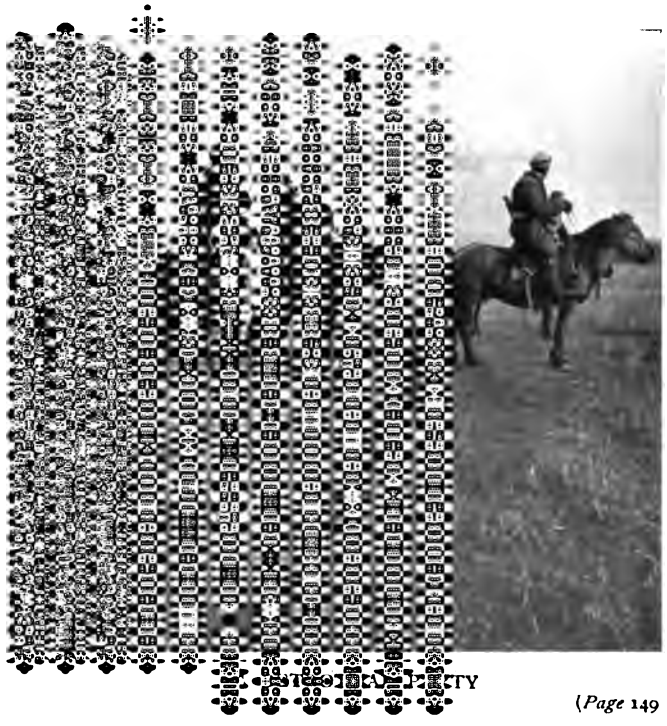


(*Page* 149

with it. It looked a most exciting variation of the conventional way of getting one's hair cut.

October 1st.—Left camp at 9 A.M., taking my shelter-tent, and went as far as the ponies could go up the nullah where we saw the ibex on the 27th September. We pitched camp at 1 P.M. An hour later we went up the hill to spy, but saw nothing, and returned about 5.30.

I only took cold mutton, bread, tea, and jam with me for dinner and breakfast, and found myself wishing for something hot after a long day's stalking.

October 2nd.—Abdul, Arka, the Kazak, and self left camp at 6 A.M., but not seeing anything from the second ridge, I sent the Kazak to take my shelter-tent back to the main camp. Then setting out for the head of the nullah immediately behind camp, *vid* the head of the nullah we were in, we followed, as far as possible, the contour of the great ridges which divide it up, and at 1 P.M. were beginning the ascent of sixth and dividing ridge, when Arka saw an ibex on the sky-line of the seventh ridge. As we were obliged to wait till he went off the sky-line, I had lunch, and as my feet were feeling rather sore, I took off my boots and changed my socks (from one foot to the other!), which gave me a good deal of relief.

We then stalked the place on top of the seventh ridge where the ibex had disappeared. We thought he had gone to lie down, but we saw nothing of him till at last I spotted him disappearing over the sky-line where the seventh ridge joined the ridge dividing the two big nullahs.

We went up there, but could see nothing until, happening to turn my glass that way, I saw an ibex come up from behind a small ridge and lie down on the top of it.

As he seemed a big one we stalked him, and got to within 100 yards of where he lay. As it was now getting late, and we were a long way from camp, I did not wait for him to get up, but fired at him, though he had only about half of his body exposed. The bullet went a little low, but very luckily ricocheted into him, though a little far back. I was afraid I had missed, and scrambled up to the point where the ibex had been, Arka going in front. I lay down there, and to my surprise saw a herd of seven ibex appear about 200 yards off, near the sky-line. The leading animal, who was a little lower down the hill than the rest, appeared to be wounded. He disappeared behind a rock, but a black fellow, who was apparently the biggest of the herd, got up on to the top of it. I fired at him, and he collapsed. The other

now came in view again, and I fired at him again. He turned downhill, evidently very badly hit, while the others disappeared over the sky-line. Going forward to hallal this last (he measured 52 inches), we found another ibex stone dead just below us, which I said was the one I had fired the second shot at, but Abdul declared was the one I fired at first when lying down. He measured 47⅞ inches.

Arka cut off the heads and covered them up with stones. We then rolled the bodies down the hill, and tied a piece of string, with bits of numdah hanging from it, over them in order to preserve the meat from the wolves and vultures until we could bring it into camp.

About 5.15 we started back, but did not get in till 9.10 P.M. We were impeded both by a slight fall of snow, which made the steep grass-slopes very slippery, and by darkness, which came on at about 6.15. I consider this a very long day, as excepting the time spent in spying and about half-an-hour at 1 P.M. for lunch, Abdul, Arka, and I had been on our legs since 6 A.M., and had during that time crossed eight high ridges and spurs of the northern range.

On reaching camp we found that Ihr Jan had found, caught by hand, and killed the wapiti I found on 15th September. He was just alive still,

though my bullet had broken his near thigh, and Namgoon's, when he tried to finish him, had broken the fetlock of the same leg. He was a twelve-pointer (6+6), not a fourteen, as I thought, but a fine head nevertheless. Length from burr to top on outside curve, 50¼ inches; tip to tip, 46 inches. Namgoon, who had been sent out to look for the third ibex wounded on September 30th, failed to find either it or my knife.

October 3rd.—A wet, snowy morning, spent in camp.

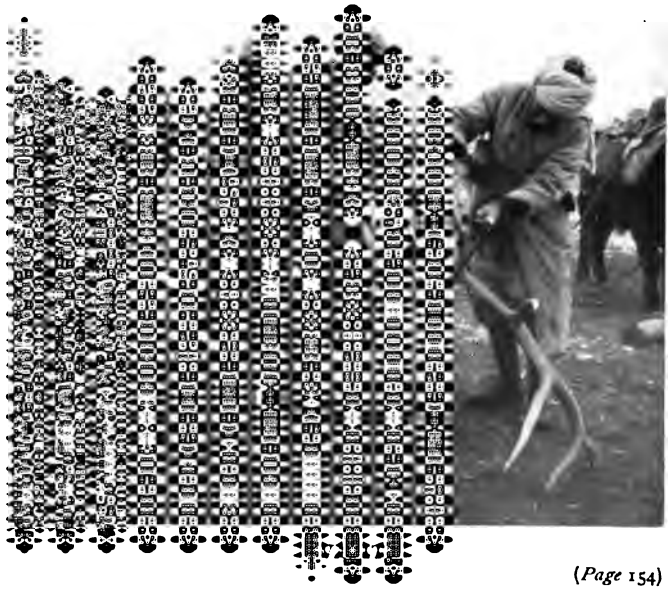
Arka brought in the two ibex heads.

October 4th.—Left camp at 7 A.M. to look for the ibex which we had found on the 2nd, and spied them at the head of the nullah above camp, but as a wapiti stag came into view below them in the open at that moment, we decided to stalk him instead. When we got nearly up to where we had lost sight of the stag Arka would hurry too much, and the result was that I, who was following him a couple of yards behind, suddenly caught sight of the stag making off up the opposite side of the little nullah in which he had lain down for his midday siesta 400 or 500 yards away.

The ibex also had seen us come up the nullah, and had disappeared, and so we got back to camp at 7 P.M. empty-handed.

PLATE 35

(*Page* 152)



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October 5th.—Started at 7.30 A.M. up the valley behind camp to look for the ibex we saw yesterday. We had no expectation of finding a wapiti. When about opposite the branch nullah, where my men had once previously spoilt a stalk by trying to engineer a drive, I saw Arka, who was leading, suddenly throw himself off his pony and begin getting the rifle out of its cover. I dismounted, tore off my poshteen, and loaded the rifle. High above us, at the edge of a patch of jungle, a wapiti was steadily looking at us. I could not wait for my glass, but, as he seemed big, I put up my 300 yards sight, and aiming a little above him, fired both barrels. At the second shot, to my surprise, he fell stone dead. I had hit him where neck and shoulder join; but on getting up to him I was much disappointed to find he was only an eight-pointer, and a poor head at that. A branch behind him had made his head look like a big one.

Having skinned him we rode to the top of the ridge, and then along it, looking for the ibex. We saw nothing until I sat down to eat my lunch preparatory to leaving the ponies and climbing a steep ridge to spy into a further nullah. While I was eating Arka had been examining the lower end of the little nullah at the top of which we were through my glasses. He saw there a big stag and

some hinds feeding near the junction of this nullah with the main one.

Leaving Ihr Jan with the ponies, Arka, Abdul, and I started for the stag. Arka made a very good stalk across the open top of the nullah, and down behind the ridge opposite that on which the wapiti was. The back of this ridge was exposed to sight in several places, over which we had to squirm our way among the stones, but eventually we arrived opposite him at about 120 yards. Now a difficulty arose, as the ridge was covered with dwarf juniper, just high enough to be difficult to fire over. Fortunately I found a bit of dead juniper just high enough to rest the rifle on. Taking advantage of this I fired at his shoulder (he was three-fourths facing), and hitting him where neck and shoulder join, killed him stone dead. He rolled down the hill, and was only prevented from falling into the ravine which separated the two ridges by a tree which stood on the very edge. This was lucky, as if he had fallen he would probably have smashed his horns on the rocks a hundred feet below. He proved to be a twelve-pointer, with horns measuring 47 inches in length, 36½ inches from tip to tip, and 8½ inches in girth between the brow and bay tines. Though not quite so big or so wide a head as that of the stag shot on September 15th, this was even

thicker, and being also very symmetrical, made a fine trophy.

As the stag was too heavy to move, I made Abdul photograph him as he lay, with Arka and myself standing behind him (see frontispiece).

Ihr Jan, watching the stag from the top of the nullah a mile away through the big telescope, saw him fall, but did not hear the shot.

Instead of spending the night in my shelter-tent, as I had intended, I returned to the main camp, reaching it at 6 P.M. I had got my shot about 2.30 P.M., and we started back about an hour later.

October 6th.—Remained in camp. Arka, who had remained where the shelter-tent had been pitched, two hours' ride away up the nullah, spied for the ibex, but saw nothing.

October 7th.—Started at 7.30 A.M., and went up the ridge south of camp by a nearer road than any I had been hitherto. Saw some fairly big ibex, but in places where I could not get at them. At 1.15 I sent Abdul and Arka down to the bottom of the nullah, which was too steep for me, to look for the third ibex, hit on September 30th. At 4 P.M. they rejoined me at the place where we had left the ponies, bringing the head, which measured 48½ inches. They had found the ibex almost at once: he had fallen from a steep

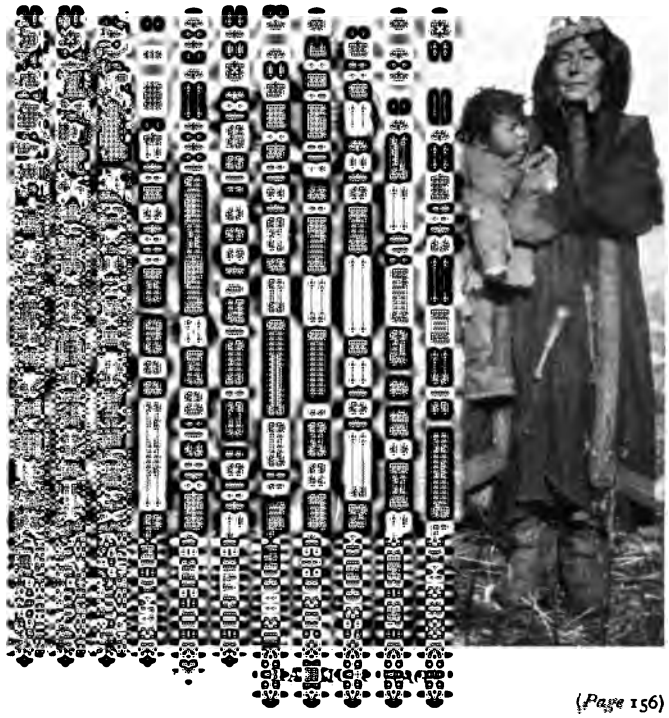
place into the stream at the bottom of the nullah, probably on the day he was shot. We reached camp about 5.10 P.M., just after a heavy snowstorm had come on.

Namgoon, who had been sent out again northwards to spy, reported some good ibex near the place where I shot two on October 2nd.

October 8th.—Went out at 8.40 P.M. to look for the ibex Namgoon reported. They had, however, moved on, and those we saw were too far off to stalk. A very cold wind was blowing on the heights, which made me most uncomfortable. We reached camp about 4.30 P.M.

October 9th.—Shifted camp about four or five miles down stream, and then turned north up a side nullah for another four miles, and camped at an elevation of 8300 feet about half a mile below a Kazak camp, on the road between Kok Su and Kara Jung. This was a very cold place, and all the shelter the Kazaks had with them was the extremely primitive one shown in the illustration. They were very busy shearing sheep when I saw them. These sheep were all of the fat-tailed breed, and were quaint-looking objects without their wool. The shikaries and I went three miles or so further up the nullah, but only saw a fox. I had several shots at him a long way off (120 yards) with the .22,

PLATE 36



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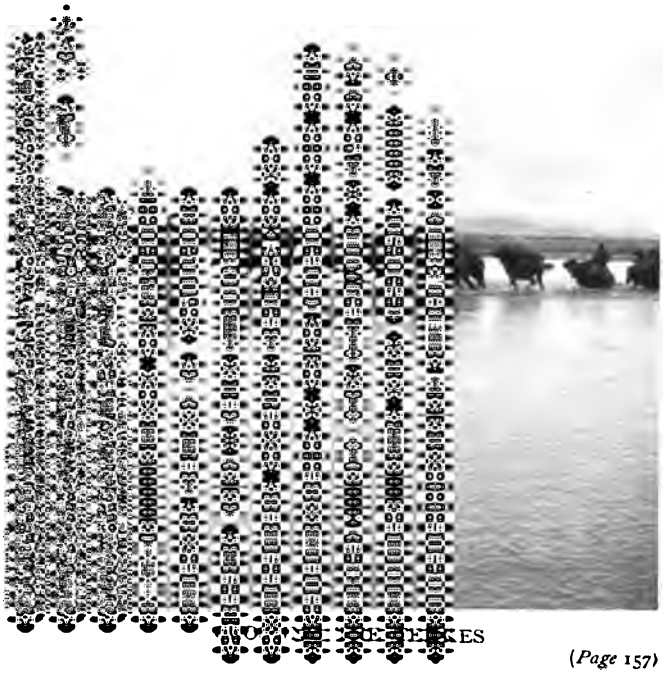

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and when I had finished my ammunition he came to within about 40 yards of me.

October 10th.—Did not leave camp on account of snow and wind. Namgoon and Ihr Jan went out about 10 A.M., and returned saying they had spied some good ibex.

October 11th.—Left camp at 8.10 A.M., and reached the top of the hill E.N.E. of camp in about two hours. At first we only saw some female ibex, but when we had gone a short distance down the far side, Abdul spied a herd of nineteen ibex lying at the top of the ridge opposite us in the snow. We crept back to this ridge, and as the wind was blowing directly down it, we tried to stalk below them. The ibex soon after moved down our side of the ridge about 100 yards from the top and lay down again. As the ground did not allow us to get within 300 yards, and the wind had now commenced to blow at right angles to the ridge, I told Abdul and Ihr Jan to stand fast, and with Arka only I went up to the top of the ridge and moved along it till we were above the ibex and about 150 yards from them. As they were all lying down I would not risk a shot, but watched them for half-an-hour or more. Then the wind changed, and they got a suspicion of danger, and all got up and began to move off.

I fired at the beast I had picked out and saw

him drop, and then fired my left barrel at another, whom I selected hurriedly. The ibex were not in a very favourable position, as they were on a small ridge which ran down from and at right angles to the main one, and which concealed them from me as soon as they moved. Arka and I ran down the top of the ridge for 100 yards or so, and I then had a couple of long shots, but under-estimated the range and did no damage. Some way further on Arka found the ibex which I had hit with my second shot, lying down. I put two more bullets into him at about 100 yards and killed him. Unfortunately I had picked out the wrong one as they bolted, and this fellow only measured 42½ inches. Going back we found the first ibex very sick but just able to move; my bullet had missed his backbone on the left, about the middle, by about an inch, and being fired from above had gone down and forward. I tried to finish him with a shot in the back of the head from the .22, and as it produced no effect I rapidly fired three shots at his shoulder, which penetrated his heart and killed him. He measured a bare 50 inches—not as big as I had hoped.

I lunched about 2.45, and started for camp as soon as the ibex had been skinned. We got in just as it got dark, about 6 P.M.

CHAPTER IX

SPORT IN THE TEKKES VALLEY

October 12th.—Started at 8.45, and reached the top of the Kushtai Pass in about four hours. We camped about five miles below the top of the Pass at 8550 feet at 4.10 P.M. Snow lay on the top of the Pass for some distance below the summit on both sides. As the drifts were waist deep in many places the going was very heavy for the laden ponies, and we had a good deal of trouble to get them along. Luckily we had a favourable day for the job, with no wind and very little sun, or we might not have got over at all. As it was, we took seven hours and twenty-five minutes to cover some ten or eleven miles.

October 13th.—Marched at 9.30 A.M. The road for the first two hours was through pine woods and over slippery black mud and stones, but afterwards it became very good.

Camped at 3.30 P.M. in a Kazak khourga at Haas Kushtai in the valley of the Kordai River. Elevation, 5680 feet.

October 14*th*.—Marched at 9.45, and camped about 11 miles on at Airka bhai, in a pleasant sheltered place by the stream, at 1.30.

Went out at 3.30 to look for roe, but only saw a doe. Riding along in the morning sun I was quite warm in a thin cord suit; but in the afternoon, when it clouded over, though I put on both a sweater and a poshteen, I was glad to walk to keep myself warm. Elevation, 5800 feet.

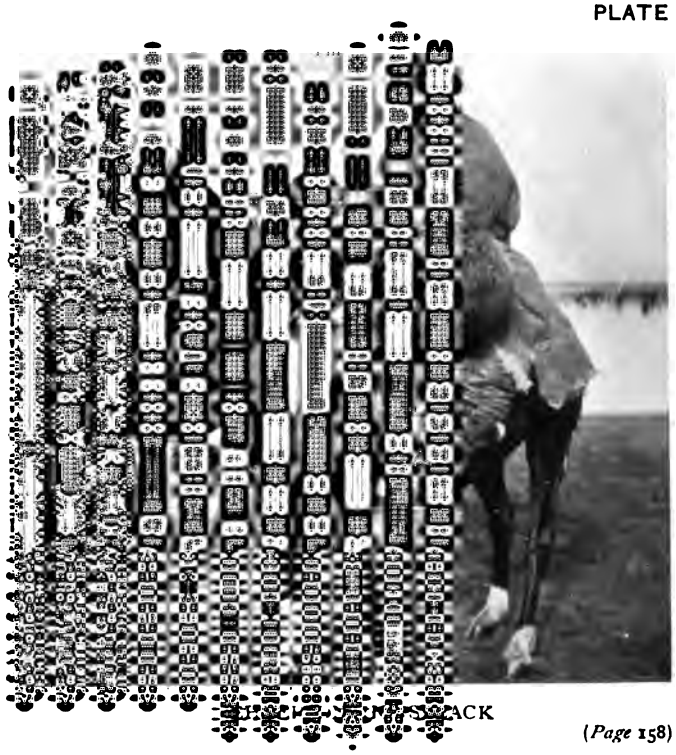
To-day I sent on Habiballah with a Kazak and two pony-loads of horns and empties to Chelakturuk, to fetch my shot-gun and some stores from my reserve supplies there.

I heard that my postman, who had been ordered to return to Kok Su *viâ* Kushtai, had started off yesterday *viâ* Khungal, and so missed finding us.

October 15*th*.—A disastrous day. I was clean "off," and could hit nothing. We started at 8.45 and went up the nullah. We saw a fair lot of roe, but I did not get a shot till about 2.45; then after a long stalk, and waiting for one to come out of the jungle into the open, I missed a good roe. I was a long way above him on the hillside and about 150 yards away, but I certainly ought to have killed him.

Soon after, while stalking another roe, Abdul saw a wapiti close to us. I had six shots at him

PLATE 37



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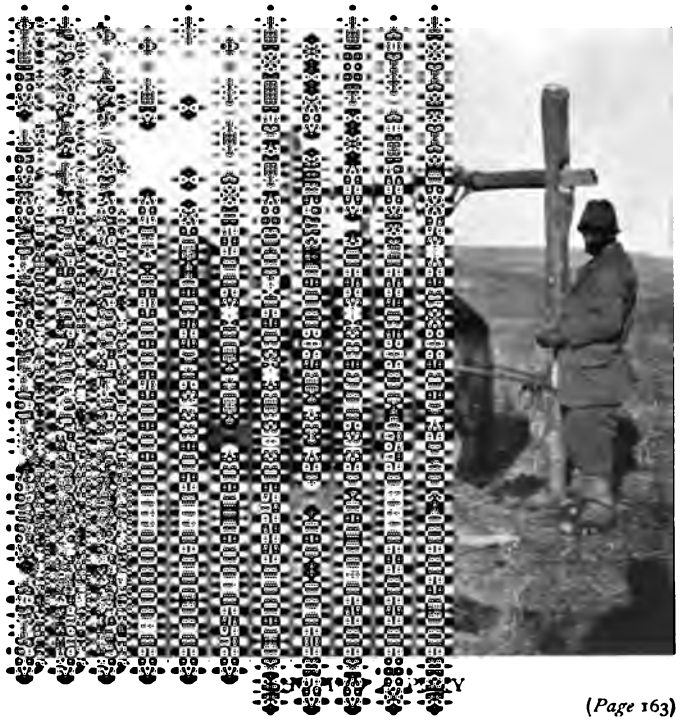

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as he walked away—he seemed to know he was quite safe—at from 180 to 250 yards, and never touched him. Then on the way home I had a shot at another nice roe. He was about 110 yards off, and seemed to fall to my shot, but it was only his jump of surprise, for he skipped off untouched by my second barrel also. The light was certainly bad, but I ought to have got him. I fired ten shots and never touched a hair; on an ordinary day I ought to have got at least two out of the three chances I had been given this day. The view from the mountains across the broad valley to the snow-clad mountains beyond was very fine, but did not compensate me for an empty bag.

Abdul, who had a good view of the wapiti, said he was a twelve-pointer, but not as good as any of those I have already got, which is some consolation.

October 16th.—Left camp at 8.30, but had hardly gone a mile before it came on to snow. We therefore lit a fire and sat down by it to wait. At 11.30 it cleared up a little, so we left the ponies and started up the hill. The mist, however, soon came down again, and we could only see at intervals. At last we saw a roebuck, and Arka and I stalked him. He was not more than 600 yards from where we were spying, but a long round uphill was

necessary to get to him. When we got within shot it began to snow again, but the roe showed himself in the nick of time (about 3.45), just before it got too thick to see, and I put a bullet from the .350 into his loins and killed him. He was about 120 yards off. He measured 15 inches and had 4+3 points.

When we got back to where we had left the ponies at 5 P.M. we found Abdul's nag missing. Soon after, we heard two Kazaks talking in the mist, and, catching them unawares, bagged one of their ponies for the dismounted man, telling them to look for, and bring on, the lost pony. Two ponies, belonging to Namgoon and Ihr Jan, had been stolen during the night, but we afterwards recovered them. We then went about six miles on to Kizil Bulak on the Kok Su, where we found our kit and two khourgas ready pitched for us just across the river. Elevation, 4480 feet.

The Kok Su River issues from the mountains about three miles south of Kizil Bulak, and joins the Tekkes River 20 miles north of that place. Habiballah met us here with my shot-gun and some stores he had brought from Chelakturuk.

October 17th.—Marched at 8.40 A.M. and reached Chelakturuk at 11.30. There was the usual Kazak encampment beside the stream, but this time it apparently consisted of only one or two families,

as there were but three khourgas. The women were cooking the midday meal in the open as we passed. I spent about two hours shooting in the jungle by the river, which was beaten towards me by some mounted Kazaks. I got three pheasants, one woodcock, and one hare, and missed one pheasant. Another, a runner, escaped. I fired eight cartridges.

Marched again at 1.50 P.M. and reached Kukturuk at 3.45 and camped there. We were told there were some pheasants in the jungle beside this stream also, but though we beat it down for some distance we did not see any. The people in Kukturuk Nullah are Kirghiz, though nearly all the other valleys in the Tekkes are inhabited by either Kazaks or Kalmucks.

October 18th.—Marched at 8.30 A.M. I sent the baggage direct to Moin Tai with orders to camp high up the nullah, but my men camped quite low down, near a Kazak village. I went round by the Tekkes in hopes of getting some pheasants, but only got one and a quail. On the way we met a Kazak family party, all mounted, and obviously dressed in their best clothes. I inquired where they were going to, and was told that the lady in the fur cap was being escorted by her relatives to her intended husband's encampment

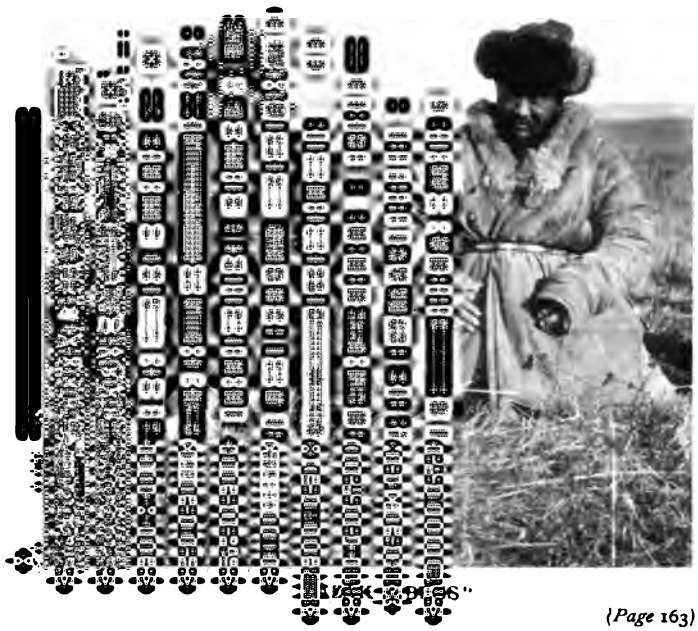
for her betrothal ceremony. She was quite nice-looking, and had a clear pink and white complexion. Her hair was plaited into many little tails, which hung down over her shoulders. Her coat was made of some material resembling velvet, and was fastened round the middle by a sash. The sleeves of this coat were so long that they came right down over her hands and reached beyond the tips of her fingers, thus taking the place of gloves. The pommel of her saddle was plated with silver, and in it were set numerous jewels, principally turquoises, and her pony's breastplate was covered with silver-plated bosses.

Only the unmarried girls wear these fur caps—married women wear a sort of white linen head-dress. These women appear to lose their looks very young, as the faces of all but the youngest had a very yellow and faded appearance. The man who was accompanying the party was carrying a small child in front of him, and one of the women was leading a spare pony in case of accidents.

I reached camp at 4.15. Elevation, 5180 feet.

My post-bag reached me here, and at last I got some news from home—the first since July 6th; but only two letters arrived, and two newspapers dated September 7th.

October 19th.—Marched at 8.20 A.M., sending the



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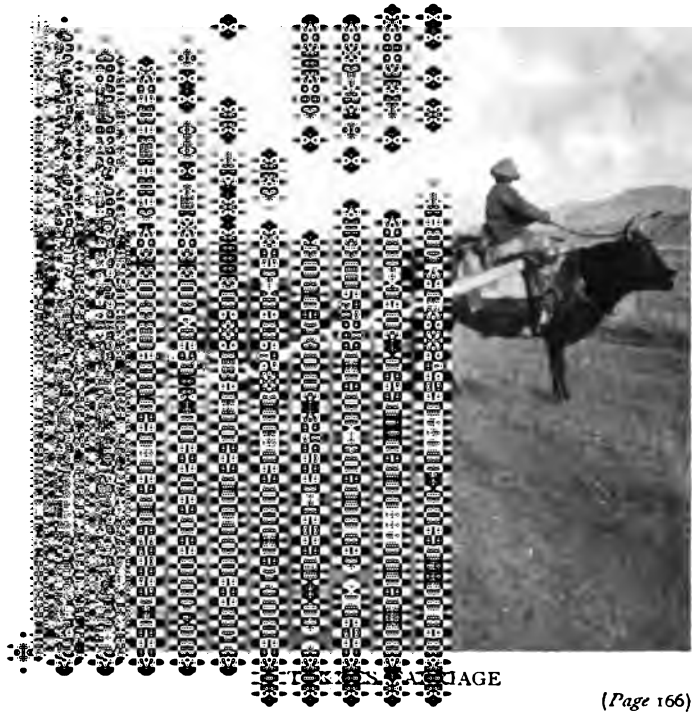

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camp to the point where it ought to have been pitched last night.

Stalked a nice roe, but as I had to get above him on the same slope, in order to get within range of him, it was very difficult to make him out without exposing myself, owing to the convexity of the hill-side. He either saw or heard me, and made off without giving me an opportunity of shooting him.

About noon it began to snow, so we lit a fire close by a big fir tree and tried to keep ourselves warm. Although these pines afford excellent shelter from rain they are no protection from snow, which filters through their branches, and lies as deep on the ground immediately under them as in the open. This snow fell in exceedingly fine flakes, and was much less labour to trudge through than snow usually is. It did not seem to consolidate at all.

By 3 P.M. we were tired of waiting, and returned to camp, which we reached an hour later.

Shooting is impossible while snow is falling, as one cannot see far enough. The more powerful one's glass, the thicker the snow-flakes seem to come down, blotting everything else from sight.

Camp was in an elevated and cold spot (7950 feet). The Kazaks, in their usual helpful way, had bolted back when half-way, taking one of the

khourgas with them. I was therefore obliged to have my tent pitched, and give up the other khourga to my men for them to cook and sleep in.

October 20th.—It snowed all day, so we did not go out. I found my tent a desperately cold place to sit in, so when the missing khourga arrived about midday, I had the tent struck and the khourga pitched on the same site. I had a fire lighted inside, and when I had got my feet warm again considered myself very comfortable.

The snow ceased about 8 P.M., and the sky got a little clearer, but a strong wind was still blowing.

October 21st.—A still and bright day. I started at 8.45 A.M. and struck a wapiti track almost at once, and followed it till 1.15 P.M., when the stag got wind of us and made off. I saw three stags and a hind in the afternoon, but none were big enough to tempt me. I stumbled on some roe on the way back to camp, but they made off before I could make a target of them.

October 22nd.—Left camp at 7.55. About 10 A.M. Namgoon spied two roe. They soon lay down, and Arka and I then crawled up within about 80 yards from them. After a good deal of gentle whistling on our part, the buck got up, and I shot him through the heart. When shot he ran about 60 yards in a semicircle, simply spouting

blood, before he fell. The horns, 3+2 (one point broken off) and 12¼ inches from tip to tip, were unusually white and smooth. Afterwards we went on as far as the point where the ridge descends steeply towards the Tekkes, but only saw a bear in the distance and some small roe.

On the way home, I saw a herd of six or seven roe. We had an easy stalk, and lying along a steep slope, with Arka propping me up from below, I shot the buck through the heart at about 100 yards. He was hit a hand's-breadth further forward than the other, but as he had no suspicion of danger he dropped in his tracks. His horns were 3+3, 15 inches in length, and 14½ inches tip to tip.

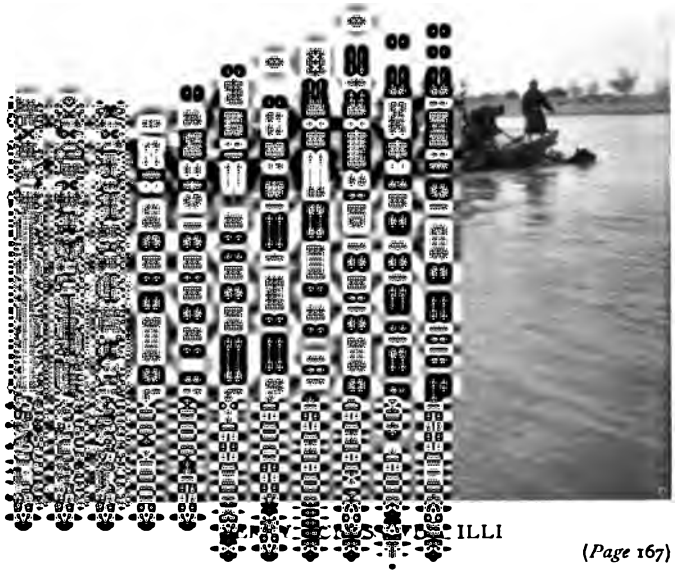
I fired a shot, at about 200 yards, at another buck who was with this lot, but missed.

October 23rd.—Started at 8.30 A.M., and went to a nullah beyond the point we reached on 21st. Arriving at 11.15, we saw nothing till 1.30, when Arka spied a dozen wapiti below us, of which two appeared to be good stags. The best stag went and lay down in a little open space on the top of a ridge covered with pine trees, where we could just see him. It was a very awkward place for a stalk, so we watched the stag for nearly two hours, but as he made no move I then decided to make the attempt.

I had but little hope of success, because, after losing sight of him when about 500 yards away, it was impossible for us from the shape of the ground to get another view of him until we were almost on the top of him. We had to climb up a fairly steep slope covered with snow, over a lot of fallen pines, so could hardly avoid making some little noise. If the stag moved he would get out of sight at once among the trees in whatever direction he went.

However, we struggled up the slope, Arka carrying the .350, myself the .360, and Abdul following with the khud-sticks (alpenstocks). Suddenly, as we were very cautiously nearing the spot where we had seen the stag lying, Arka stopped and pointed, evidently having seen him. I could see nothing till I took a couple of paces towards Arka, when I caught sight of the stag, about 80 yards off, looking full at me.

I was out of breath, but had a quick shot at the stag's shoulder from where I stood. He staggered and disappeared, evidently hard hit. Rushing up to the top of the ridge, we saw the stag hobbling down the other side. Arka, who had the .350, wanted to fire, but I snatched it from him and fired four shots, two of which hit the stag and broke his near hind leg, high up. Though he



ILLI

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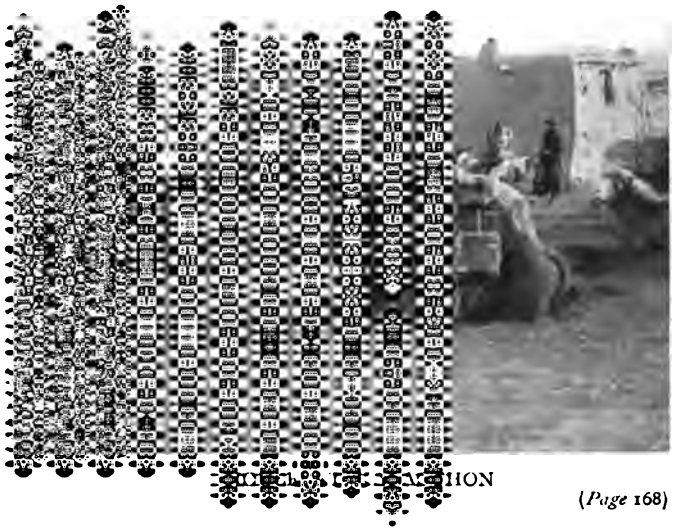

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had now only two legs, as the first shot had smashed his off fore about four inches above the bottom line of his chest, the stag managed to go another 100 yards down the hill, and had to be finished off with a shot in the heart at close quarters.

The poor beast gave a sort of despairing cry when we came close to him, and he saw it was all up. He was a twelve-pointer, 6+6, length 44½ inches, tip to tip 43½ inches—not quite as good as the others, and not nearly as good as we thought, for we had fancied on first seeing him that he was a sixteen-pointer. Still he was a fine beast.

We started to return about 5 P.M., and after a cold march through the snow reached camp long after dark, at 7.45 P.M.

October 24th.—It was now so cold that I decided to give up attempting to shoot any more wapiti, and move to some place where it was a little warmer. I therefore marched at 9 A.M., and reached the Agoyas River, where we encamped, about 4 P.M. Found some duck (mallard) on a little stream about half-way, and shot two. Elevation, 5750 feet.

At this camp I settled my accounts for the hire of ponies, cows, sheep, and khourgas for the two months I had been in Illi. They amounted to

700 roubles, making, with the sums I had advanced, a total of 950 roubles (say £100), without including wages of Indian servants, shikaries, postman, or the Beg's present.

October 25th.—Marched at about 9 A.M., and reached the Tekkes River at 1 P.M. Shot my way along that river to Gilan, which I reached at 4.30. I only bagged three pheasants, and had a lot of trouble to get them. The cocks have white rings round their necks, and their wings are much whiter than those of the pheasants one usually gets at home, but the hens look just like English ones. I saw also a good many female roe. Elevation, 5390 feet.

October 26th.—Marched at 10 A.M., and crossed the Tekkes River about a mile above Gilan, reaching the Kalmuck encampment of Kok Bel at about 3.30 P.M. These people have not the best reputation, and their village was the dirtiest I had yet seen. Their women in particular are filthy-looking hags.

All Kalmuck encampments are infested with dogs, which share the shelter of their masters' tents. I was told that when a Kalmuck dies his naked body is carried a few hundred yards away from his tent, covered over with a piece of numdah, and left. If the dogs have eaten his body within

three days, he is counted as having been a worthy tribesman, but if they will not eat it the priest pronounces him to have been a sinner, and, like the Church in other countries, levies a fine on the dead man's heirs under the pretext of securing the mitigation of his punishment in the world beyond.

The Tekkes, where we forded it, runs in two channels, and the southern one, the largest, was about girth-deep.

I killed five pigeons (a family shot for the pot) and two ducks, a mallard and a shoveller. Elevation, 6640 feet.

October 27th.—I started about 8.45 A.M., in hope of finding some karelini, as, according to Abdul, my shikaries had declared this was a good place for them. I saw no signs whatever of their presence, nor did I see any place which looked in the least likely to harbour karelini, and so returned to camp much disappointed.

October 28th.—Left Kok Bel at 9.30, and reached the Tekkes River about 1½ miles from camp at Gilan at 1 P.M. During the summer months, when the snows are melting, it would have been impossible to have crossed the river at this point, but at this season there was not much water coming down, and we crossed without difficulty.

I wondered how a native sheep I had with me

would get across, but one of the Kalmucks solved this difficulty by carrying it over in front of him on his saddle—man, pony, and sheep all appearing to regard this as a commonplace proceeding.

During these last few marches some of my baggage was carried on camels. The illustration shows one of these animals being loaded up before a march.

Found a covey of partridges near the river, and though they flew well, I managed to get ten, as they only took short flights. I also got two duck and one teal, and so used fifteen cartridges to some purpose.

October 29th.—Left Gilan at 9.30 A.M., and reached Shottu about 3.30. The going was very bad in places, as the soil there had a top coating of greasy black mud, and was frozen hard below —a description which applies to almost the whole of this part of the country—and, when a light fall of snow is just melting, the ground is very slippery indeed.

I came on some partridges close to camp, just below the bridge over the Urteng River on the west side, and knocked over three, but only picked up two.

At this place I paid off the pony-men from

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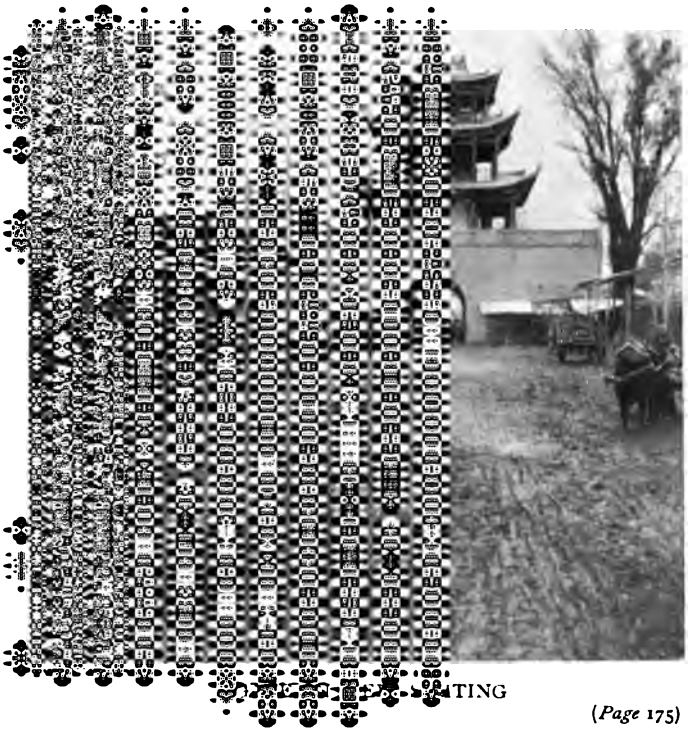

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Agoyas. I had sent Abdul into Kulja from Gilan this morning to get ponies, and news as to what the road between Kashgar and Andijan is like in winter. He was to return, after allowing for a stay of two days in Kulja, on November 8th.

October 30th.—Having heard that my Kazaks had not received their pay, which I had handed to Yusuf (the man sent by the Jamjung to look after me) on their behalf, I started at 10.45 for Kulja to investigate the matter. The weather was vile (fine, driving snow), and at 2.15 P.M. I stopped and camped at Aksu Karaul, the discomfort of marching being too great. When I got in my moustache and beard had icicles two inches long hanging from them. I had also managed to find something in my limited menu which had violently disagreed with me, and was feeling very ill.

October 31st.—A very cold night. The Aksu Karaul stream froze. My lunch was frozen, and even while the sun was out my breath froze on my moustache: my ink-bottle in its metal case inside my writing-case, which in turn was packed inside another box on a pony, was frozen when I reached Agoyas.

Started at 9.45 A.M., and reached Agoyas at 4.30 P.M. Here I paid Namgoon and Arka their

wages, and paid Ihr Jan his wages and backshish, and also bought a wolf-skin from him. I also paid the hire of baggage ponies from Shottu.

November 1st.—Marched at 9.30 A.M., and reached a small valley just beyond Moin Tai at 1 P.M., and as there were no other khourgas obtainable nearer than Kukturuk I camped in this valley.

On the way I met two Germans, who said they were geologists on their way to Naryn Kol. Their names were Dr. Kurz L. (Luscks?) of München, and Herr Franz Kostner of Coroare; they had a Russian guide with them, and told me they proposed returning to Kulja in a fortnight. These were the first Europeans I had seen since leaving Tashkurgan, if an organ-grinder, apparently a Russian, who came to see me in Yarkand, be excepted.

If what I hear be true, my caravan bashi, Abdul Aziz, is a very choice specimen of villainy.

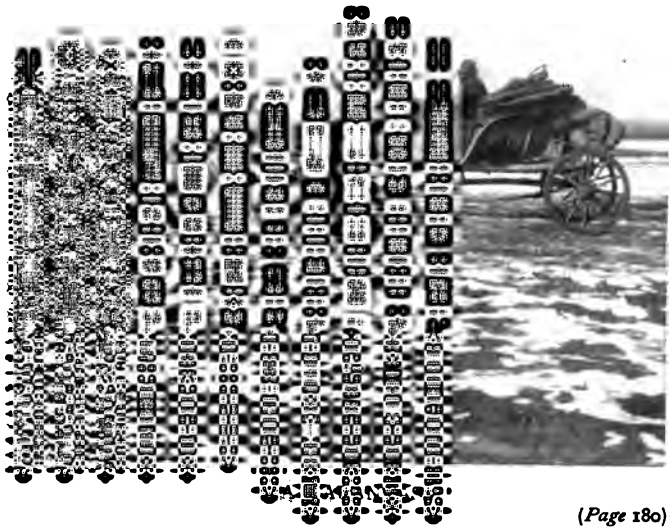
I do not speak Turki, and as the owners of my baggage ponies live at a distance, I entrusted their pay to Yusuf as noted above. Yusuf, I had been informed by Abdul, was a Beg (minor official), but it appears he is really only a kind of orderly. I had given him 250 roubles as an advance of pay, and finally 700 roubles in full settlement of the amount due to my Kazaks,

telling Abdul to explain to him in my presence what it was for, which he appeared to do.

Abdul, it appears, really told Yusuf I was giving him gold to take to Kulja and change for silver there, and when Yusuf brought this change back, Abdul, pretending he was taking it to me, put it in his own pocket. Habiballah was to have a third share in the loot, and is said to have received a silver watch (which I had ordered to be sent as a present to the Taotai of Aksu) as a bribe to keep him quiet for the moment. Azdullah was brought simply because he was a relation of Abdul's—his nephew—and to watch the others in case they told me anything. Rahmah, the syce, apparently acted as pimp for Abdul. Of course, I had soon found that these last two followers were totally unnecessary, but had not fathomed Abdul's real reason for bringing them. What share of the loot Amid Dar (the cook) was to get I do not know. Abdul is said to have given the Kazaks only 125 roubles out of the 950 due to them: he thought that sufficient to keep them quiet.

However, when thieves fall out it is said that honest men come by their own; Abdul has apparently proved too greedy, and thus his delinquencies have come to my knowledge.

Abdul is said to have kept for himself the present I forwarded to the Kalmuck chief at Karashar and the ten roubles I sent to the Tungāns who helped to find my wounded stag. The pay at half rates for the time (four days) I had to wait at Passu, when I was too ill to pay the coolies personally, or to march, was also pocketed by Abdul. He got a dustoori (commission) of 18 seers from the man who sold me the Chinese embroidery, one of 4 seers each on the ponies I bought at Yarkand, others of 2 to 7 seers on the saddles I purchased for my servants. When marching, in spite of my always paying everything myself, he was clever enough to borrow 8 tongas or so from the caretakers of the rest-houses, saying that the money was for me, and that I would pay on leaving. Of course, I knew nothing of this, and only paid for my night's accommodation when I left. The servants did not get all the clothes I bought for them in Srinagar, nor have they seen much of the advances—50 rupees and 50 roubles—made for rusud (food allowance). According to the other servants, who do not seem to exactly worship him, Abdul seems to have played just the same game in 1905 and 1906, when employed as caravan bashi on similar expeditions.



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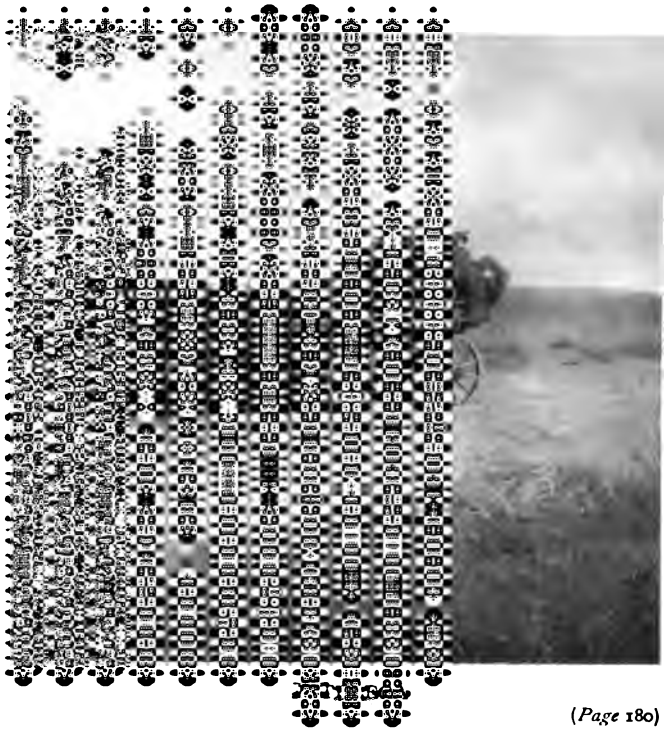

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November 2nd.—I left Moin Tai at 8.35, and reached Chelakturuk at 2.15. I shot six pheasants on the way. I had left my spare stores and Yarkandi ponies in charge of Azdullah and Rahmah at this place.

The ponies had all quite recovered from the effects of being castrated, and had got quite fat after such a long holiday. As they had no shoes on, it was necessary to get them shod before riding them to Kulja. In order to shoe the ponies the local farrier rigged up a sort of frame consisting of two stout uprights and a cross bar. Each pony in turn was practically slung from this, and so rendered unable to resist the obviously unwelcome attentions of the farrier (see illustration).

A deputation of Alawan Kazaks came to interview me to-day: they stated that they had only received 142 roubles out of the 950 roubles which I had disbursed. This sum they said they had got from Abdul on October 30th, and denied having received anything previously.

November 3rd.—Several Begs came to interview me with regard to Abdul Aziz, and as the Alawan declared they had only received 142 roubles, I told them I had sent 950 roubles to be shared between them and the Gazai Kazaks. The Alawans and

Gazai are the two principal Kazak tribes. Went out and shot ten pheasants and a hare in the afternoon, and filled up the day in sorting clothes and stores.

A very large wapiti head was brought me this evening, which I would cheerfully have given £100 to have secured myself. A stray Kazak had shot it about a fortnight previously.

Old Namgoon says that he has never seen or heard of a head which approached it in size.

The natives here do not often shoot the stags except while they are in the velvet. The reason for this is that the horns of a stag in velvet are esteemed by the Chinese to be an excellent remedy against impotence. They dry and powder the horns for this purpose, and consider that the finer the antlers from which it is made, the more efficacious will be the remedy. A really good pair of horns in the velvet are said to be worth £25, so no wonder they are getting nearly exterminated. Just at this time, too, the stags leave the jungle and are often to be got in the open. This particular head is a magnificent specimen. Points 10+9, length 60⅛ inches, tip to tip 33 inches, narrowest between points 30⅛ inches, widest between points 70¾ inches, widest between main horns 46⅝ inches; girth, between second and

third tines 8⅜ inches, between third and fourth tines 8¼ inches, between fourth and fifth tines 9⅜ inches at smallest places.

November 4th.—Having had a lot of trouble in getting off, I did not start till 10.30 A.M., and so had to camp at a place called Cheelazuk, about two miles south of the Tekkes, after marching only eight miles or so.

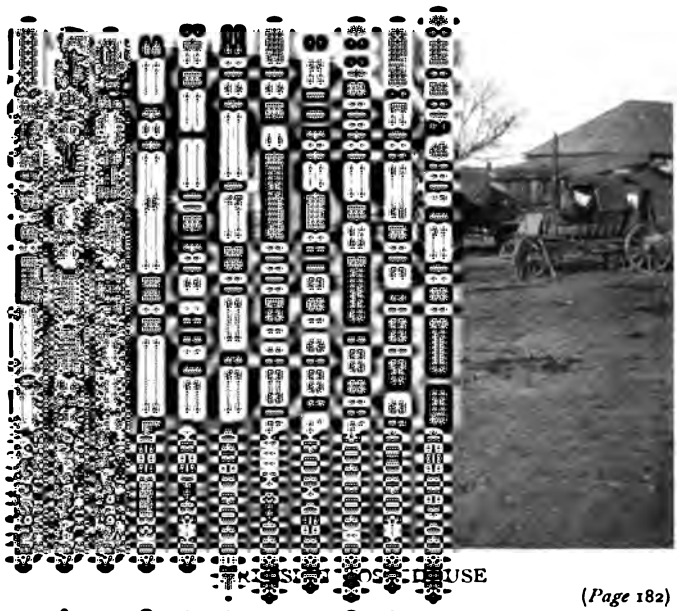
Shot six pheasants and two hares, and could have got more but would not, as I could not have eaten them.

I had to go some three miles down-stream from the Chelakturuk-Tekkes junction to the ford over the main stream. The Tekkes here runs in four channels, the two bigger ones being girth deep. At the ford the river-bed consists of large round stones, and the current is strong, but at this time of the year it is considered on the whole an easy ford.

I bought a wolf-skin poshteen (fur coat) from Namgoon, and the big wapiti head from a China-man. I do not know what to do with the latter, as it is not my own trophy, but as it is five inches better than the best Asiatic wapiti mentioned in Rowland Ward's "Records of Big Game," I thought I had better bring it to England, much as I dislike "bought" heads.

I photographed Namgoon and Arka, gave them their backshish, and sent them home. Both are capital fellows, and I parted from them with regret.

To-day, while marching over the flat country which borders the Tekkes River for a mile or two on either side, I came on a specimen of what I suppose was the earliest and most primitive form of carriage invented by man. It consisted merely of two long poles, fastened at each side of an ox's saddle. The two free ends of these poles were allowed to drag along the ground, and were kept at a fixed distance from one another by a light cross-piece. A Kazak lady mounted on a pony was in charge, and one of her young hopefuls was acting as postillion.



MISSION HOUSE

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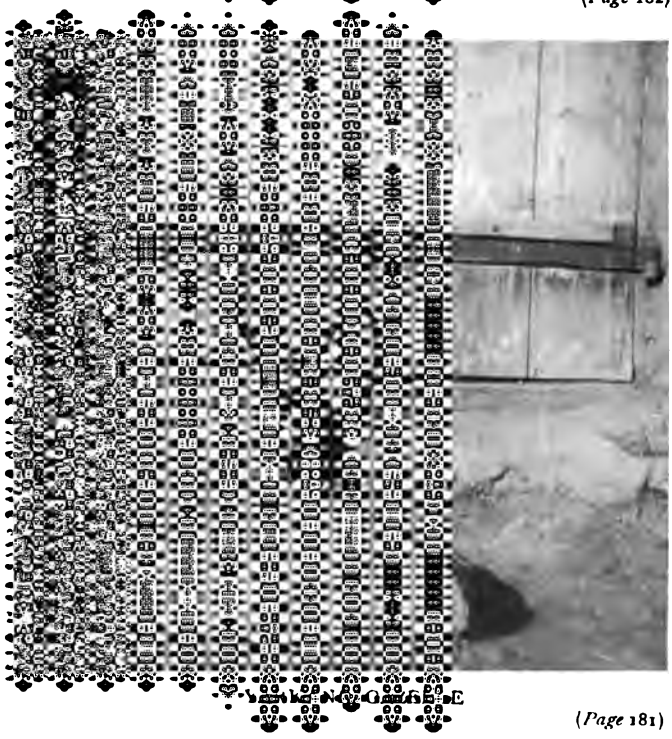

NATIVE GRAVE

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CHAPTER X

KULJA

November 5th.—Started from Cheelazuk at 8.30 A.M., reached the top of the Sarbruchen Pass at noon, and camped at village of Sharawochi at 4.30 P.M. My baggage is now carried on camels. Elevation, 3460 feet.

Saw a lot of chuckor on the road. They were very confidential, but my larder being now well stocked I only shot four.

November 6th.—Marched at 8.30 A.M., and reached the ferry across the Illi (as the Tekkes River is called here) at 12.30 P.M.

My baggage was quickly off-loaded and ferried across the stream in a large flat-bottomed punt, the few ponies I still had with me being made (my own pony excepted) to swim alongside. The camels had to cross by a ford about three miles further down stream, so that by the time they had been loaded up again it was nearly 3 P.M.

I camped close by the ferry in one of the first houses I had seen since I crossed the Mozart

Pass. The walls of all these houses are built of mud bricks dried in the sun; they are usually one storey high, and have flat roofs. Though perhaps not all that one could desire, this house was at least much warmer than a tent, and I slept very comfortably inside it on my camp bed. The door on the right centre of the illustration led to the room I occupied, the buildings on the left being the offices. Kalachton was the name of this place. Elevation, 2060 feet.

November 7th.—Left at 8.10 A.M. We passed through several villages on our way to-day, and the ruins of many more. All these villages are built on much the same lines, and are usually mere collections of mud huts.

Although we marched fairly fast, and only stopped about twenty minutes for lunch, we did not reach Kulja till four o'clock, and it was fifteen minutes later when I entered my quarters. I think I must have done 30 miles to-day. Then I went to call on Sotnik Dmitri Nicolaivitch Vodopianoff, who was most kind, and made me stay to dinner. I also met the incoming Russian consul, who was driving by.

Yusuf met me outside Kulja, and brought me two letters dated September 26th and October 6th.

November 8th.—Shaved off my beard, and then

went to lunch with Vodopianoff. This officer commands the Cossacks who form the consular guard; he took an immense amount of trouble on my behalf, and is one of the most unselfish gentlemen I have ever met. Afterwards I went to call on two Chinese officials. Father E. Raemdonck of the Belgian Mission, who speaks English and Chinese well, kindly came with me to assist at the interview.

Abdul was, I fancy, not very pleased at my having come to Kulja. His version is that Yusuf stole the money I sent the Kazaks. He, however, produced 500 roubles, which he handed over to me on the spot.

November 9th.—I now paid the Kazaks the money I had obtained for them from Abdul, and heard afterwards that they had paid 60 roubles to my cook, Amid Dar, for informing me of the robbery.

Then the dragoman of the Russian Consulate came to see if I had any kit for sale, and Vodopianoff soon after called. Then the Do-tai and the Shigwan of Kulja presented themselves, and two Fathers of the Belgian Mission. Between the party and my servants we could boast some acquaintance with twelve languages, without counting some battered remains of Latin and

Greek. These consisted of: English, four; French, five; German, two; Russian, four; Belgian, two; Chinese, five; Turki, three; Urdo, three; Persian, Pushtu, Kashmiri, and Ladaki.

The two Chinamen took tea with sugar but without milk, tried some Crème de Menthe, and drank some champagne. They would have liked some tinned fruits, but I had none left. I took a photograph of them both, and another of the Do-tai and his escort. The Shigwan is a Chinese and the Do-tai a Manchu.

I then went to lunch at 4 P.M. with my Cossack friend, and afterwards accompanied him on a visit to the Russian consul.

I wired to ask the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg to get me leave to cross the Russo-Chinese frontier at Khargos. Permission to travel back to Europe through Russian Middle Asia had already been accorded me, but as I had been expected to cross the frontier at Irkestan (on the way from Kashgar to Andijan) it was necessary to get instructions sent to the Customs station on the route which I now proposed to follow to allow me to pass and take my rifles and other effects with me.

Got a letter from Umballa, dated September 10th.

November 10th.—Received a visit from the Rus-

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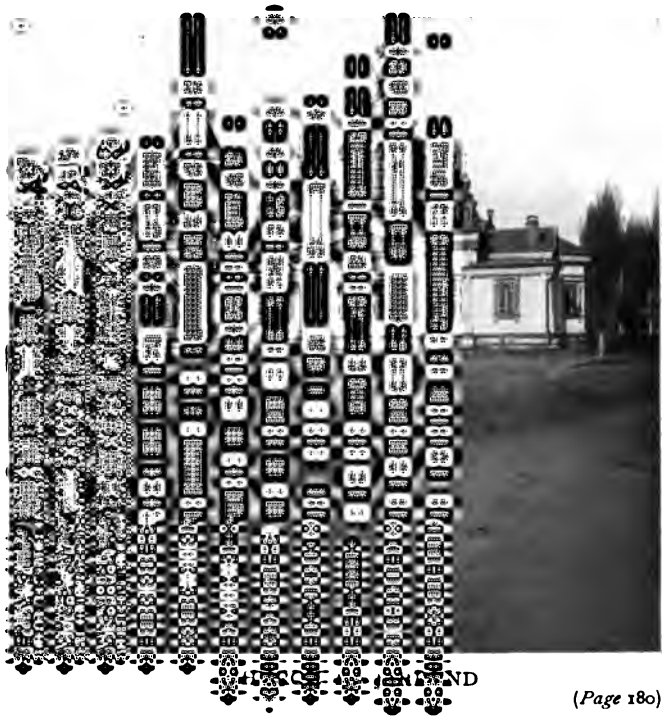

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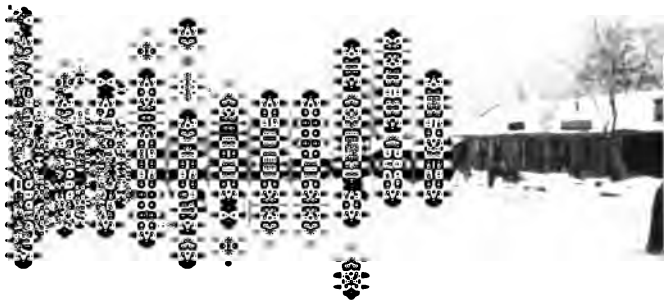

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sian Consul and his successor, and later on a Chinese official called. I had only my stuffy little room in a not too commodious Russian house in which to receive them; and on this particular morning, when I was re-sorting and casting clothes and kit and trying to sell my rifles, the room presented the appearance of a general store—it was one litter of clothes, guns, cartridges, stores, and medicines.

I lunched with Father Raemdonck at the Belgian Mission. The food was cooked by a Chinaman, and served by two small Chinese boys. The Fathers were most hospitable, and insisted on my trying some gin, and some wine of this and of last year, all of which they had made themselves. Their wine is rather like Rhine wine, and last year's vintage, the best of the two, was by no means a bad drink.

In the evening I finished sorting my kit, and sold all five ponies, my lamp, my "colonial" pattern saddle, two small servants' tents, and some stores.

The post arrived to-day from Tashkent, and I got a letter from England dated October 17th.

November 11th.—Went to the Russo-Chinese bank and arranged for letters of credit on Tashkent and Moscow. The Agency (carriers) said that it would take six months at this season for my sport-

ing trophies to reach England. I am therefore trying to arrange to buy a tarantass for myself, and a similar vehicle without a body to take my kit to Tashkent. They should cost respectively 70 and 40 roubles, but will save me the bother of changing everything at each stage of the long drive.

The present exchange rate in Kulja is £10=93 roubles, and Chinese money is converted into Russian at the rate of 10 tongas (Kashgari) per rouble. An Illi tonga=8 Kashgari tongas.

On going into the Russian post-office or bank at Kulja it appears to be the correct thing to bow to each of the clerks, who bow to you in return, and shake hands with you. Business is not transacted at a great rate; in fact it took the clerk, who seemed quite busy over it, a quarter of an hour to stamp five and register two letters for me.

November 12th.—I went with Vodopianoff in the latter's tarantass to Old Switing, a Chinese town on the way to the frontier. We started at 12.25, and reached our destination—the house of the missionary, Father Hoogar—at 5.15 P.M. The Father, who was most kind to us, wears Chinese dress. His house is a Chinese one, and he fed us on Chinese fare, on which he lives himself. The guest-chamber was warm and very comfortable.

A Chinese house usually consists of a central

room or hall, with two side rooms, having at the end a raised daïs. This is really a sort of oven, which is heated in winter to form a warm sleeping-place. The servants' rooms and offices are on the sides of the inner courtyard. I met here the Father Superior of the Mission, who had just arrived from Manas, fourteen days east from Switing, on the Urumchi Road. He said there were a good many tigers in the swamps near Manas, and declared he had passed hundreds of Yarkand gazelle close to the road three days out from Switing.

November 13th.—About 11 A.M. we started for New Switing, but first visited the Cossack quarters just outside Old Switing. Cossacks are not particularly smart to look at, but their horses, stout cobs of about 14.3 to 15 hands, look very serviceable. The seat of a Cossack's saddle is a cushion high above the horse's back, and his stirrups are fastened together by an extra strap which passes under its belly. This is to enable him to perform feats of trick-riding.

After this we went on to pay a call on the Consul at his temporary residence in Old Switing. The outer wall of this house, which stood by itself in a large garden, very barren-looking at this time of the year, was painted in various designs.

The Consul was going away to Europe on leave,

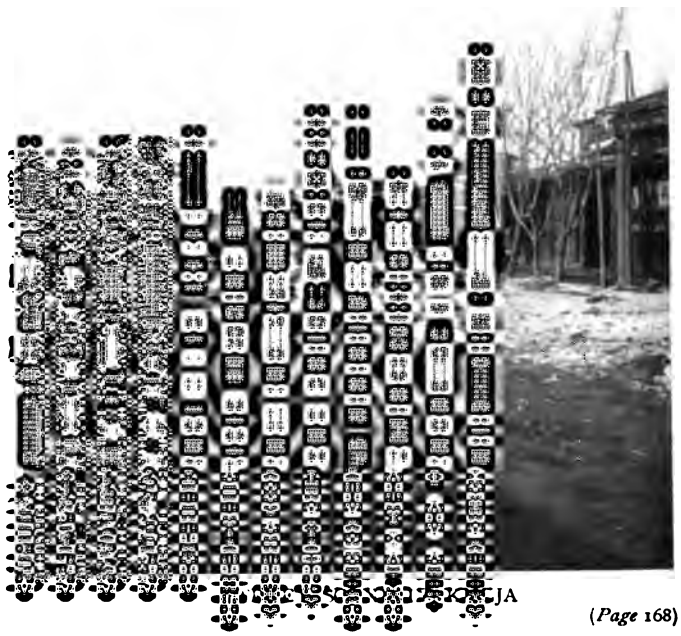
and had gone to Switing to call on the Chinese Governor before starting.

This personage is called the Jamjung. He is a very high official, and is, if not equal in rank to a Viceroy, a very great man. As the Jamjung is a Manchu and such an important person, he cannot reside in the Chinese town of Old Switing, but has to have a separate town of his own, called New Switing, to live in.

From here we went on to New Switing, some four or five miles away, but as we heard on arrival that the Jamjung, who was a very old man, was unable to receive visitors, I did not have an interview with him.

While Vodopianoff was away I enjoyed the society of a Russian teacher of languages who had a most peculiar appearance, being afflicted with a bottle-nose and a frightful squint, but who knew a few words of English. A Chinese mandarin, who was a friend of Vodopianoff, took us to a Chinese restaurant and stood lunch to a little party consisting of the Russian, a Chinese who teaches the Russians that language, and myself.

Lunch consisted of little bowls full of bits of meat (mostly pork, I think), and was not bad on the whole, but I fought rather shy of some black-looking eggs in jelly, not knowing whether they might not be



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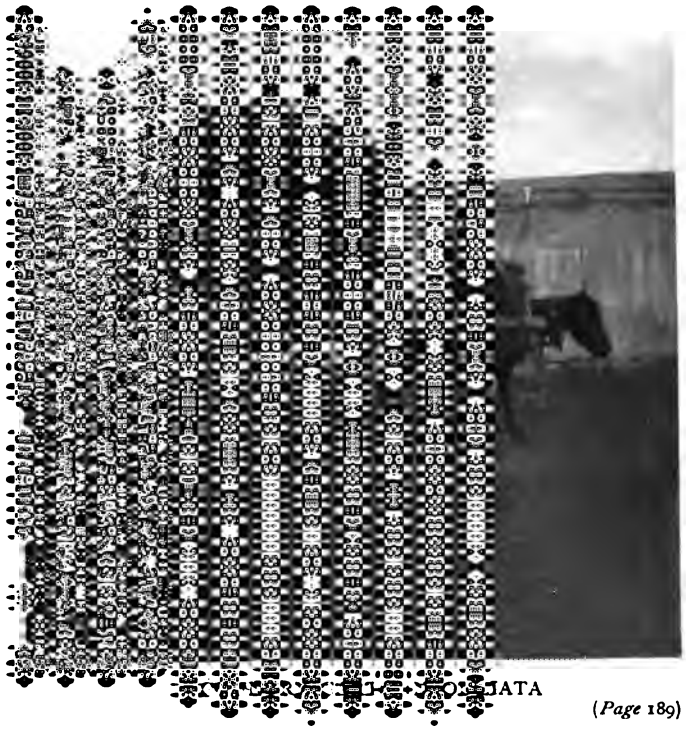

JATA

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ten years old or so. We drank hot arrack (Chinese wine) out of little saucers, but after noticing that the Chinese attendant (who was coming round with the teapot of hot arrack) poured the dregs of my saucer back into the teapot, and then refilled my saucer from it, I drank no more. A saucer of tea finished the meal.

Opposite to and on the right of the restaurant were two "coffin shops." They would be useful to most Europeans after a course of Chinese dinners.

The most imposing edifices in New Switing were the various gates. The one in the illustration was situated in the middle of the town, and seemed more for use than ornament—in fact, it seemed to be distinctly in the way.

We started on our return journey to Kulja at about 4 o'clock, and reached our destination at 8.40 P.M. The tarantass, with plenty of grass to sit on and a pillow to lean against, was by no means an uncomfortable method of travelling, but the journey was a cold one, and even my Peshawari poshteen was hardly warm enough.

We changed horses once on our way, but in spite of the heavy going and our travelling a good pace, none of them seemed at all distressed.

Our driver was a Cossack. He had only his military greatcoat, which did not look a very good

or warm garment, instead of the big fur coats which we were wrapped up in; but in spite of this he did not seem to feel the cold.

November 14th.—Vodopianoff gave me to-day some sentences to help me on my way through Russian territory, and also told me the charges for post-horses, &c.

I had all my heads wrapped up in straw ready for packing. I bought a cart to carry my trophies, and bargained for horses. Though I was very busy all day, I did not seem to have got any "forrarder." I have already passed a week at Kulja.

November 15th.—Awoke rather seedy with a sore throat. I do not wonder, as the sanitary, or rather insanitary, condition of this place is extraordinary.

Going with Vodopianoff in the latter's carriage to call on the missionaries, we positively stuck in the mud in the middle of the principal street, and had to get out and walk.

I called on the Consul, who kindly promised to wire the authorities to expedite my passport.

November 16th.—No news of passport. Stayed indoors all day, but went to dine with Vodopianoff in the evening. Throat much better and fever gone, but a bad cold has taken its place.

November 17th.—Still no news of passport. I

called on the Consul and spent the evening with the Belgian Fathers.

November 18th.—Still waiting, and called again on the Consul. Received four letters by post.

November 19th.—The same. Wired again to Ambassador.

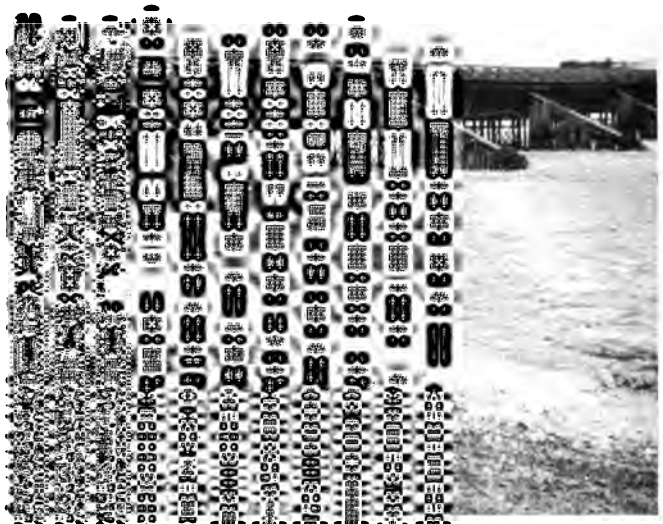
November 20th.—The same. Went to see Vodopianoff in the evening. Snow fell nearly all day.

November 21st.—A bright day but very cold. At last received a telegram from the British Ambassador, despatched yesterday evening, saying the Customs had promised my pass "very soon." It was very kind of the Ambassador (Sir A. Nicolson) to have taken all the trouble which he did to expedite my little affairs, and I felt most grateful to him for his assistance. A fortnight's stay here is really more than I bargained for when I arrived. The Consul has at last heard from Tashkent, but not from St. Petersburg; so I cannot start yet.

Supped to-night with Belgian Fathers, who lead a very simple existence. Dinner consisted of a plate of mince prepared by the Chinese cook and rather tough, five boiled eggs, and some bread and honey. Three of the Fathers were present, but though they hospitably pressed me to eat, they took very little themselves. They drank water, except one, who took nothing but bread and cocoa.

November 22nd.—I am now thoroughly tired of waiting, and as there is still no news of the arrival of my permit, I have decided to leave to-morrow at midday, and chance getting leave to take rifles across Russia when I reach Jarkend.

PLATE 45



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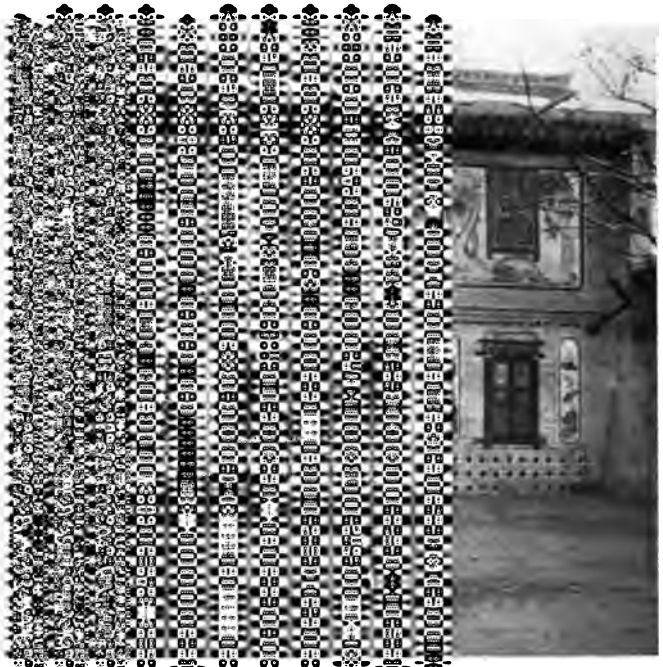


[illegible] SWITING

(*Page* 173)

CHAPTER XI

SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY MILES IN A TARANTASS

November 23rd.—This morning at last I got the long-expected telegram, authorising me to take my rifles and kit through the Customs, duty free, so I set to work and managed to get my kit all loaded up, and left Kulja at 4.30 P.M., reaching Old Switing an hour before midnight.

Getting away was a tremendous business! At the last moment I was obliged to take some people before the Consul in order to get their claims settled. Vodopianoff and Father Raemdonck came to see me off, and I said good-bye to both with real regret. They had been extremely kind to me during my long stay in Kulja, and had gone to a great deal of trouble in order to help me.

November 24th.—Though I was ready some time before, I could not get my driver to start till 9 A.M., when I said good-bye to Old Switing, and reached the Russian frontier station (Khargos) at 4 P.M. Here we got a change of horses, and continued the journey to Jarkend, where I alighted at 9.45 P.M.

Between Kulja and the frontier the posting service is in the hands of a contractor named Gymkine, but from the frontier (Khargos) to the Russian railway there are Government posts some 18 versts apart, where one can with some delay get changes of horses; but as the hired vehicles would have also to be changed at each of these posts, of which there are about sixty, it is better to buy one's own carriages and save the worry and cost of constant repacking.

—— lent me a tarantass as far as Vyerni, and I bought a telega to carry my baggage and trophies.

November 25th.—At Jarkend I had to visit the Customs and "declare" my things. The chief Customs officer, who is, I believe, a Pole, was most obliging, and I had no trouble.

Jarkend has wide streets laid out at right angles to one another; it has a garrison, and boasts an exceedingly ornate Orthodox church.

At 12.30 we left the town, passing first through a belt of tree jungle with high grass, and then through a country covered with low thorny scrub, rather like the South African karoo. The country here is quite different from that about Kulja, and does not seem to be so cold.

About 18 miles from Jarkend I saw some does,

and afterwards a single buck—a Jeron or Yarkand gazelle. I hurriedly unpacked my glasses and the .350 and pursued him. After going about half a mile, I came up to the buck, and found that three does had joined him. It was now getting dark, and though the buck was a long way off, he seemed thoroughly on the alert, and unlikely to allow me a chance of getting any nearer. I could only see his head and neck above the scrub, as he stood facing me. My chance of hitting him appeared very remote, as it was now so dark I could not use the open sights, so setting my telescopic sight at 300 yards I fired. Greatly to my surprise the buck fell, and I found my bullet had broken his off fore and off hind legs. He had a nice little head of about 14½ inches.

We reached the post station at Khoi Bin at 7.30 P.M., and being told that the road ahead was very bad, decided to put up there for the night.

November 26th.—Started at 7.30 A.M., and found road, though against the collar, not nearly so bad as we had been led to expect. After the first stage, indeed, the road was quite good, as the soil of the district, which is reddish in colour, was very hard. It grows scrub and a little grass. Near the third station the linch-pin of one of the front wheels broke, and the wheel came off, letting us down with

a bump, but no damage was done, and we were quickly off again.

All the post-houses had advertisements of American mowing machines on the walls, and I saw one of these machines in a farm-yard at the end of the first stage. As we were still over 600 miles from the railway, this seemed fairly enterprising on the part of both maker and customer.

I counted twenty-two coveys of chuckor partridges close by the roadside during the early part of this stage.

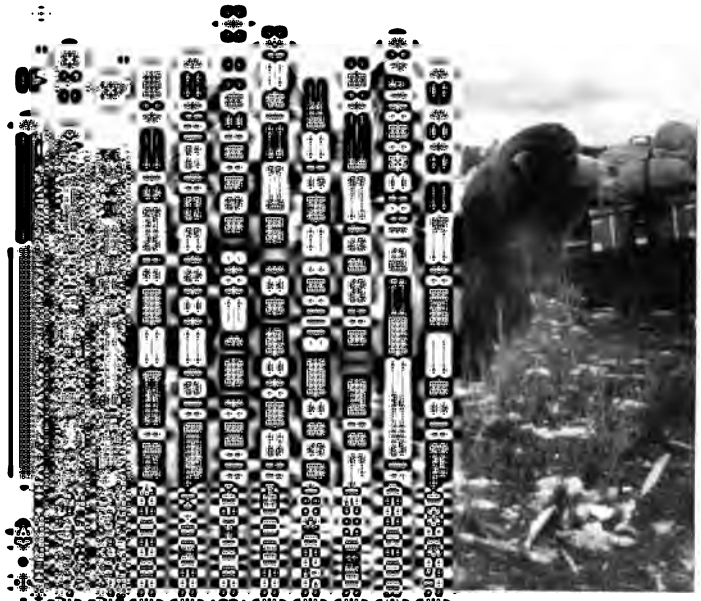
We put up for the night at ——, as the road ahead was said to be very bad.

November 27th.—Started at 7.30 A.M., and again found the road fairly good. We reached the end of the first stage at 12.30, but as there were more travellers than the post-horses could take, we had to wait until 5.30 P.M. for our change of horses, and did not finish that stage till 10.30 P.M., having only travelled about 56 versts.

The post-house here was typical of many others which I passed. The room on the left of the entrance was the one reserved for travellers, and the rest of the house was occupied by the Starosta (postmaster) and his family.

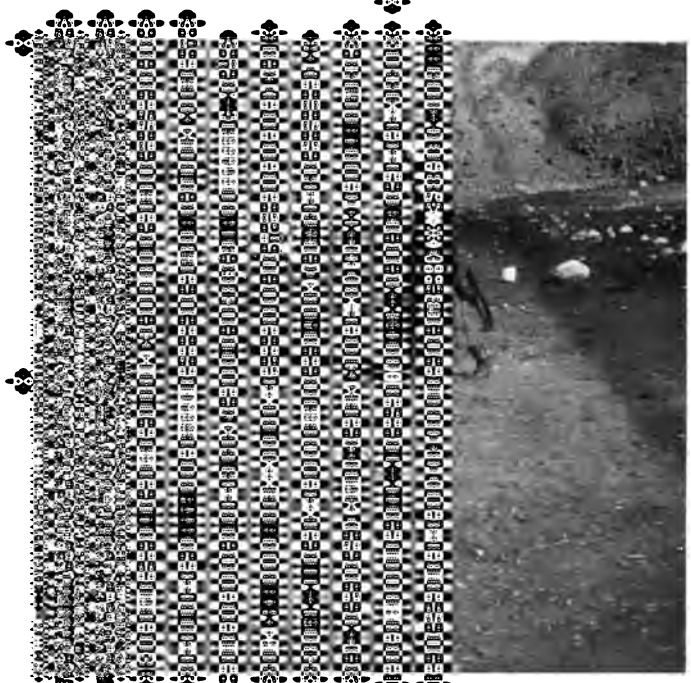
The travellers' room is usually furnished with a stove, a table, two or three benches with leather-

PLATE 46



[illegible] GILAN

(*Page* 158)



[illegible]AN

(*Page* 40)

covered seats, and a few chairs, and is nearly always clean and warm.

One could always obtain a samovar and some sour bread within ten or fifteen minutes of arriving at a post-house, and sometimes, if unusually lucky, a few eggs; but these latter were hard to get at this season. Anything beyond this the traveller must carry with him, and cook for himself as best he can in the postmaster's kitchen. If I had any eggs, I used to take the top off the samovar, spread a napkin over the opening, place my eggs on this, put the top on again, and leave them to cook in the steam. I carried some jam, tinned milk, and potted meat in a basket, and was thus able to make a meal in a very short time.

Often I was compelled to wait hours for a change of horses, as there is more traffic on the road than the establishments could cope with, but one never knew if horses would be available or not till one reached the end of the stage. If horses did happen to be available, it was much the best plan to take them and continue one's journey at once, whatever the hour might be, as otherwise they might be taken by some one else; and if it happened that the mail was nearly due, others might not be procurable for hours.

Sometimes there was a small inner room opening

off the other which ladies could use, but as a rule all travellers had to use the same room. Outside, in a sort of little entrance hall, generally stood a brass cylinder containing a gallon or two of water, and a tin basin, but other washing arrangements did not exist. When travelling in this way the Russian, if he has to wait at night, merely spreads a rug on one of the benches, puts his fur coat over him, and goes to sleep.

November 28th.—Started at midnight, and reached the end of the first stage at 5.15 A.M., but could not get horses on till 7.45. The second stage was completed at 10.40, but as the weekly post passing through had taken all the horses, I could not get any further, and had to spend a day and a night at a particularly lonely post-house, where I tried to get some food, but only four eggs and some rye bread could be produced.

Abdul's valise had dropped off the telega during the journey, and he went back to look for it without telling me, and did not reappear till 10 P.M. Unfortunately he had the keys of my store boxes with him, so I could not get at any food, and when he at length returned with a tale of woe about his valise having been opened and the contents looted, I inhumanly told him I was glad. Hunger makes savages of the best of us.

November 29th.—At 5 A.M. I was disturbed with news that the horses were being put in, and hurried through my toilet, but could not induce the post people to make a start till 7. At the end of the first stage we crossed the Illi River, here a fine stream, by a wooden bridge of ten piers, and after going three more stages, came to Vyerni at 10 P.M.

Here I put up in a so-called hotel, and was given a clean, warm room, but as I found the bed consisted of boards only, and was not much more than five feet long, I made up a bed on the floor with my valise. The floor was no harder, and had the advantage of being more roomy than the proposed couch. The furniture of my room consisted of a table, two or three chairs, and a tin basin, besides the apology for a bed which I have described.

November 30th.—Vyerni is quite a considerable town and has a very prosperous appearance. It has a garrison, and is, I believe, the headquarters of the province of Semirchensk, which in its turn forms part of the area administered by the Governor-General of Tashkent. The manager of the local branch of the Russo-Chinese bank, who spoke English fluently, kindly helped me to buy a tarantass, as the one in which I had travelled from Kulja

had only been borrowed, and had now to be returned to its owner.

I bought some sausage, jam, and bread to provision myself for the road, got away at 1.45, and travelled till 10 P.M. Then, as the new tarantass was anything but comfortable to sleep in, I stopped again for the night.

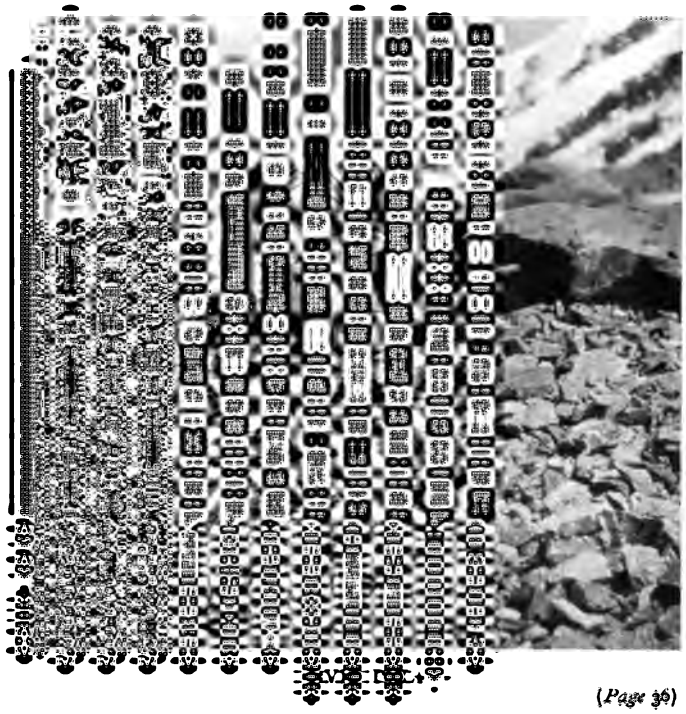
The country after leaving Vyerni is quite pretty, and a good deal is under cultivation. A fine range of hills runs parallel to and south of the road. This district is noted for its apples, which grow to a very large size, and are excellent eating.

December 1st.—About 3 A.M., a Jewish-looking individual in the uniform of a Russian officer, accompanied by two women and children, arrived at the post-house. The women jabbered, the children were nuisances, and as it was freezing about 25° outside, I did not pass a restful night.

By means of hiring privately-owned horses I got away at 7 A.M., and did four stages before midnight, having to stop for want of horses at 11 P.M. But it was a cold drive—so cold that my moustache froze to the collar of my poshteen, and the ink in my writing-case inside a yakdan was frozen hard when I unpacked it again at night.

December 2nd.—Got horses and started at 9.30 A.M but owing to our meeting two strings

PLATE 47



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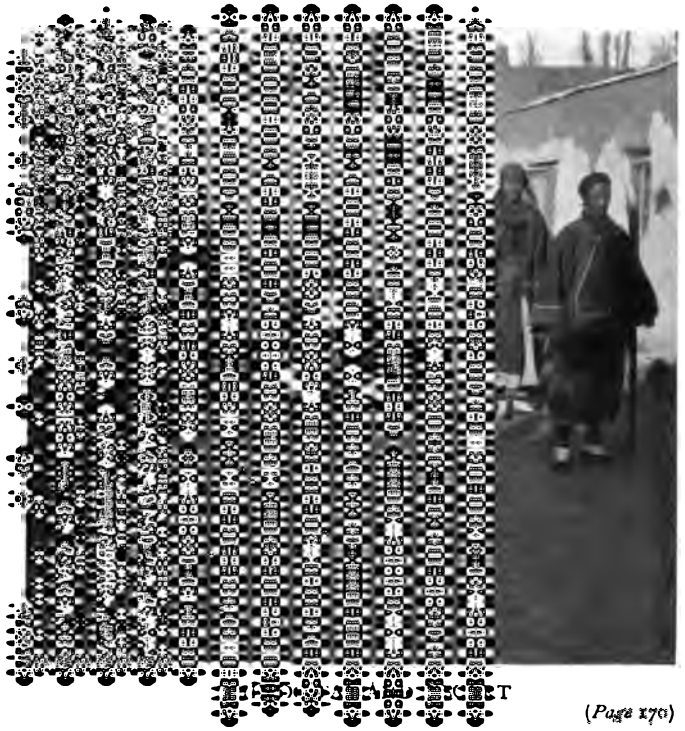


(*Page 170*)

of slow-moving carts in a low but narrow pass, and to the badness of the road, we did not reach the end of the stage (30 versts or 20 miles) till 3 P.M.

I contrived to get horses for three more stages, and so, travelling at night, reached Pishpek at 2.30 A.M.

This day a thaw set in, and the weather became quite mild, though a strong east wind was blowing.

December 3rd.—No horses were forthcoming till 10.45 A.M., and the road, which had thawed (the sun was quite hot to-day), was axle-deep in mud. This proved too much for the feelings of my telega, which broke down and had to be repaired. Luckily the smash was near the establishment of the local blacksmith.

The road for the next few marches was vile, being about a foot deep in mud, and full of holes. These holes were so bad that I often expected my tarantass would break, as indeed any ordinary carriage would have done. The worst places of all were in the villages; for the streets, being more used, and yet no better attended to than the open road, became perfect quagmires in bad weather.

December 4th.—It was hard work loading up

the horns into the telega again, and tying them tightly down. It took Abdul and myself an hour and a half, doing all we knew. The first stage of 20 versts took four hours twenty minutes, and the third stage of 26 versts (=17 miles) seven hours ten minutes; that is, less than two and a half miles an hour, though we had five horses to each vehicle. We travelled till past midnight again.

December 5th.—Arrived at 1.10 A.M., but could not get horses on till 9.30 A.M. The roads were again so vile that one's movements resembled those of a lively pea on a drum. Indeed it was no joke to be the occupant of a "carriage" in these parts; but I managed to get to the end of the third stage at 8.30 P.M.

Here I had to stop, as the Russian Consul from Kulja, who was travelling to St. Petersburg, overtook me at this place, and he and the post between them took all the available horses.

December 6th.—Started at 8.45 A.M., and did four stages over a slightly better road, but had to stop again for want of horses.

December 7th.—Started at 8, and reached Ouliata at 11.25, but could not get any horses for the next stages.

Ouliata is quite a native town with a bazaar, although there are Russian barracks and houses

there also. I bought provisions and photographed the curious local carts, which have wheels nearly six feet in diameter. The driver sits on the horse's back with his feet on the shafts and his knees up to his chin. These carts are said to be so constructed in order to get through the deep mud and snow.

By dint of applying to the Superintendent of the Post, who was most obliging, I got an order on the Starosta, and was at last promised horses.

December 8th.—In spite of this "order" no horses were forthcoming, and I had to hire privately at a high rate. I did not get started till 11.30, and only by paying extra procured horses for the second stage.

On this stage my driver followed the cart in front too closely down an incline, with the result that near the bottom, as there was no brake, the horses could not keep the heavy tarantass back, and to avoid running into the back of the cart in front, my Jehu turned over the edge of a small embankment about six feet high. The tarantass very naturally upset. I jumped clear as the vehicle turned over, but Abdul and the driver fell in a heap almost underneath it. I thought the driver was killed as the front wheel seemed to be on him, and ran to the horses'

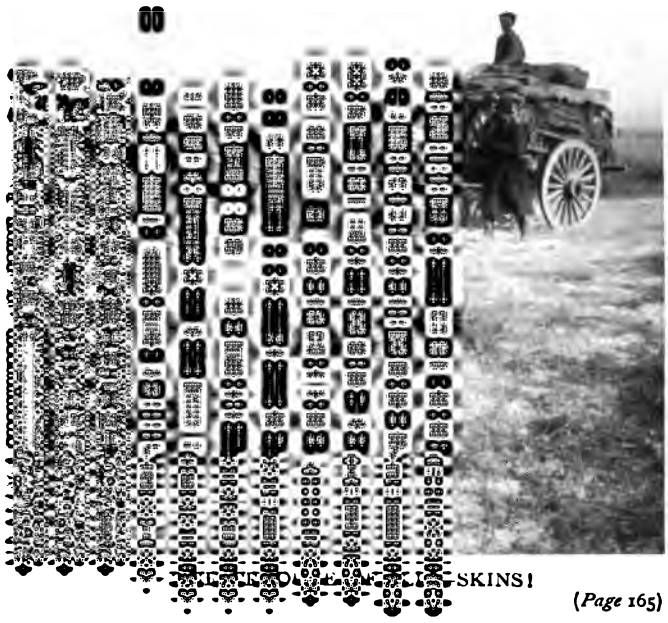
heads to stop them dragging him, but he had only got mixed up with his reins, and picked himself up, and remounted his box quite "merry and bright," an upset of this kind being evidently a very ordinary event.

December 9th.—Started at 6 A.M., but again had to hire privately for the third stage, as an Arch-priest travelling towards Vyerni had taken eleven horses—all that were available. The first two of these marches were good going, but the third, over half-frozen mud and deep ruts, was bad.

December 10th.—Again had to hire privately, and did not get started till 9.45, reaching the end of the second stage at 3 P.M. I hired again for the two remaining stages into Chimkent, but the telega upset, and gave so much trouble that I had to abandon it. This *contretemps* wasted a lot of time, and the end of it all was that the men I had hired refused to go further that night.

December 11th.—Started at 7, and reached the end of the first stage at 10.30, but here again I had to wait three hours for horses, and only got into Chimkent about 4 P.M.

I had been advised to call on M. Nicholas Roukine, the Chef de District, or Prefect of the town, and I lost no time in doing so; he kindly



SKINS!

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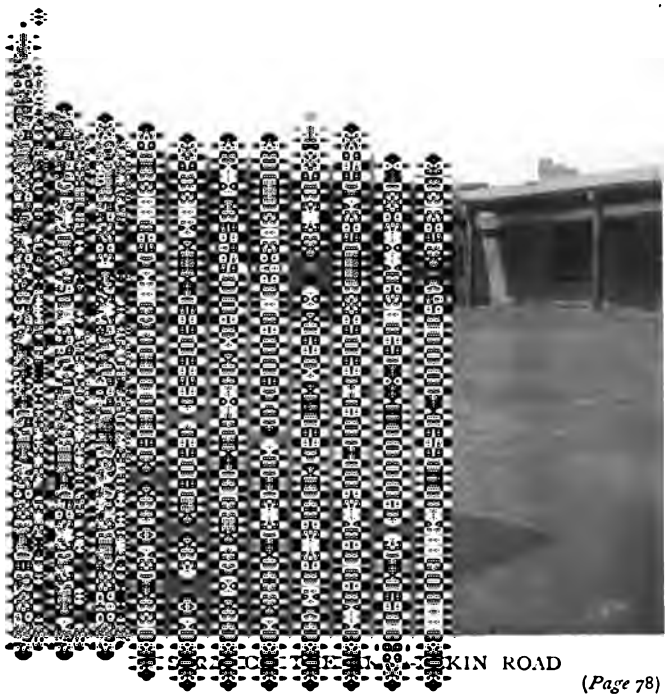


KIN ROAD

(*Page* 78)

gave me some lunch and a letter to the Chief of Police, by whose help I disposed of my tarantass, and hired some horses to take me to the railway.

December 12th.—This day I spent in getting two cases made to contain my trophies, which now will soon be *en route* for London. I got them made, packed, loaded on two country carts, and despatched to the nearest railway-station, Kubul-sai, by 6 P.M. The dimensions of one are about 64 and of the other nearly 160 cubic feet.

December 13th.—Left Chimkent at 10.40, and reached the first post-house at 4 P.M. After giving the horses four hours' rest, started again, and having driven six hours arrived at the railway station at 1.50 A.M. This part of the road was rather less bad, but as rain fell all day till about 3 P.M. the surface was very greasy.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION—THE RAILWAY AGAIN

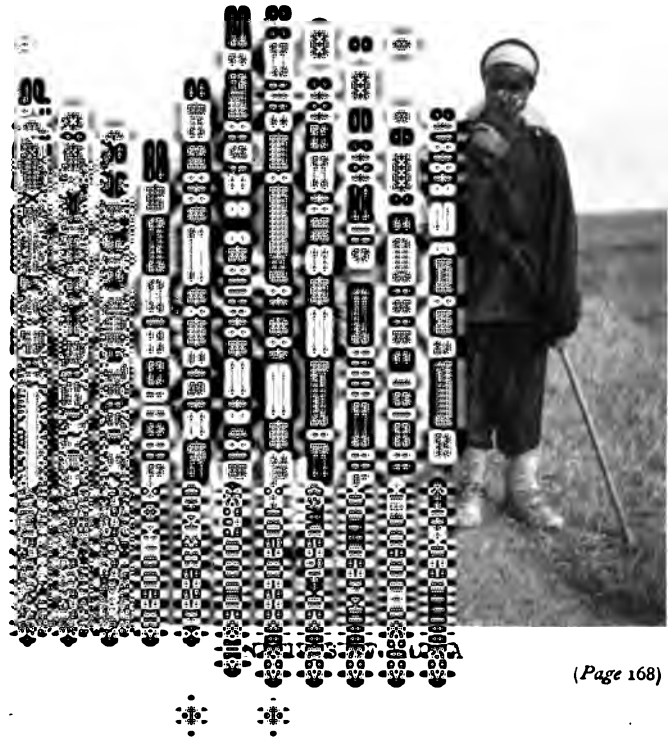
December 14th–15th.—Booked my trophies by goods train, got my own luggage booked, took tickets (an operation which lasted twenty minutes), and caught the 1.30 P.M. train for Moscow *viâ* Samara.

I secured a comfortable compartment like an English sleeping-berth all to myself. These compartments contain two berths, one above the other. The top one can be tilted up to lie flat against the wall, if not required.

The train travelled quite smoothly, though at no great pace. To my surprise I found there were at least three people on it who could speak English.

At Turkestan, a handsome station, I had dinner in a large, clean refreshment-room, which was superior to many English ones. We were, however, only given time to "bolt" our food and rush out again! Throughout the journey one had to get one's food at whatever time the train happened to stop at a station which boasted a refreshment-room,

PLATE 49



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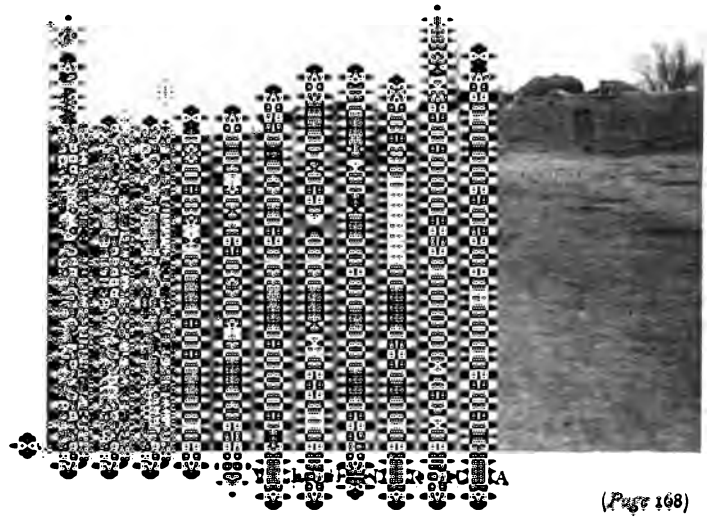


(*Page* 168)

and though we travelled in such a leisurely manner, we always had to eat at express pace.

December 16th–17th.—We reached Orenburg at 2.15 P.M. on 16th, and Samara about 5 A.M. on the 17th. Here we had to change, and, as the train we were supposed to catch was five hours late, there was a rather tedious wait.

A Mr. Ellis, of Saratoff (whose acquaintance I made on the train), kindly ordered a Russian dinner for me, which proved excellent.

Some one (I suspect the conductor of the train) annexed my kodak, in spite of my compartment having been locked up when I left it. The thief was clever enough to leave the empty case hanging as I had put it, and so I did not discover my loss till I accidentally touched the case and found it suspiciously light.

December 18th.—We reached Rursk at 9.20 P.M., and here changed trains again. This time the car was a sort of Pullman, comfortable by day, but not a good place to sleep in. Thermometer, ½° F., or 31½° of frost.

December 19th.—Our train was due at Moscow at 7 A.M., but did not actually arrive till 12.30 P.M., but no one seemed to mind a delay of five or six hours.

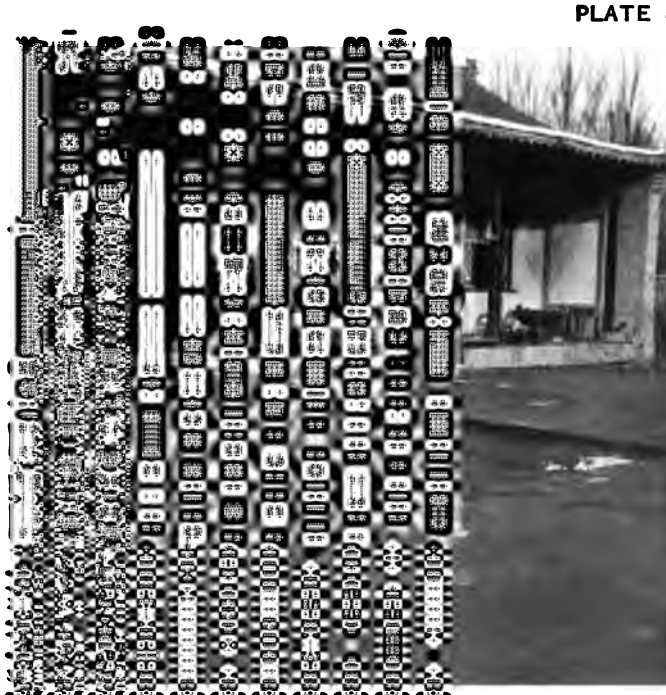
I went to the National Hotel, and got a most

comfortable room with a bathroom attached. I took full advantage of this latter, my last previous tubbing having taken place at Kulja.

After lunch I sallied forth to see what I could of the Kremlin and the Churches of St. Basil, St. Saviour, and the Coronation Church.

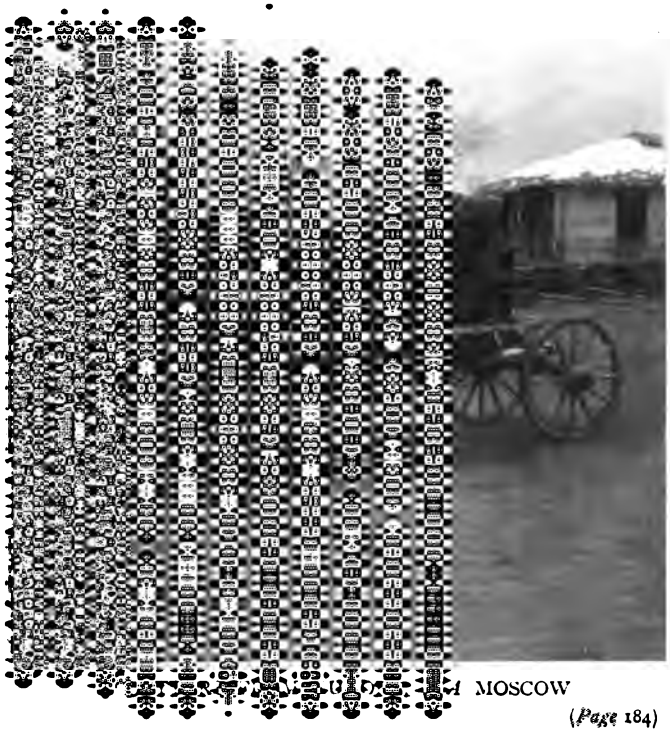
December 20th.—Got my letters from the Poste Restante, and then went to look over the Museum in the Kremlin. This was most interesting, and I specially admired the crown of Vladimir Monomach and a case of old English silver (*temp.* Henry VIII.-Elizabeth), mostly presented to the Czars of the period by the City of London. I bought a piece of enamelled silver and a ponyskin motor coat, and left Moscow for London, *vid* Warsaw, Berlin, and Ostend, at 5.40 P.M.

December 23rd.—I reached London about 11.30 P.M., and arrived at the Ritz, where I had expected to meet my people, about midnight. The hall porter was so much taken aback by the appearance of myself and my luggage, which consisted of two travel-worn, leather-covered boxes called yakdans, made in Kashmir, and costing originally about £1 the pair, and a sack tied at the mouth with string, that he nearly had a fit on the spot.



FISHERMEN'S CLASS HOUSE

(*Page* 172)



MOSCOW

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

GENERAL ESTIMATE FOR EXPENSES

	£	s.	d.
1. Preliminary expenses at Srinagar before starting, *e.g.* purchase of tents, provisions, stores, own and servants' outfits, presents for native Rajahs and Chinese officials, &c.	150	0	0
2. Road expenses, Srinagar-Tashkurgan (paid in rupees)	85	0	0
3. Road expenses, Tashkurgan-Yarkand (paid partly in rupees, roubles, and Chinese seers) . .	25	0	0
4. Purchase of ponies, and road expenses from Yarkand (July 16th) to Kulja (November 8th), paid in Chinese seers (exclusive of hire of ponies and pay of shikaries while shooting) .	150	0	0
5. Pay of shikaries, hire of ponies, &c., while shooting in Illi	130	0	0
6. Road expenses, Kulja to railway at Kabul (paid in roubles)	60	0	0
7. Expenses on rail, Kabul to Moscow . . .	15	0	0
8. Pay and expenses of Kashmiri servants (three) .	110	0	0
	£725	0	0
Less the sum realised by sale of carriages, ponies, tents, &c., at Kulja and Chimkent . . .	£50	0	0

APPENDIX II

MONEY

25 dalchen = 1 tonga.
100 kopecks = 1 rouble (2s. 2d.).
16 tongas = 1 seer (3s. 6d.).
16 annas = 1 rupee (1s. 4d.).

The rate for coolies in Kashmir is 6d. a march, except for crossing the Burzil Pass, the rate for which is 2s. 8d. per man between Gurais and Chillum Chowki. A pony from Astor to Chalt is 4 rupees.

Beyond Gilgit the rates are fixed by the Agency, and are very high, ranging from 9 annas per coolie per march up to 1 rupee per man for the last march from Misgah to Mercushi.

Eggs about 3 annas a dozen. Sheep, 3 to 4 rupees. Chickens, 6 annas.

Yâks are hired at the rate of 1 rupee per march, and 1 rupee is paid for the use of each khourga per night.

Chinese arabas were paid about 32 seers each from Yarkand to Aksu, and marpas about 14 seers.

Pony for self in Yarkand cost about 60 seers; servants' ponies about 30 seers.

The charge for the use of the Chinese serais and lucerne for 5 ponies is about 2 seers per night; ponies' forage costs about 18 tongas (16 tongas = 1 seer) per diem.

Baggage ponies from Aksu over the Mozart Pass to Chelakturuk in Illi cost 210 seers for 25.

The hire of a pony in Illi costs about 5 tongas per day's march.

Baggage ponies in Illi may be hired at 5 roubles, and men at 10 roubles, per month.

A man rides one pony and leads two, so that the cost for every two pony-loads is 25 roubles per month.

Shikaries earn 30 roubles per month.

Posting costs from 5 to 8 roubles per stage of about 18 to 30 versts with 2 carriages and 6 to 9 horses.

From Kabul, say, to Kulja is about 1160 versts and 51 stages. A verst is ·663 of a mile, say 663 miles per 1000 versts.

Indian traders in Yarkand cashed me cheques on Cox & Co., Bombay, for Rs.4700, or about £300, and I arranged with Messrs. Cox that the branches of the Russo-Chinese Bank at either Kashgar or Kulja should cash cheques on them to a reasonable amount.

APPENDIX III

RIFLES AND AMMUNITION

Double .360 No. 2 (H.V. cordite) and 160 cartridges.
Magazine .350 Rigby-Mauser (H.V. cordite) and 150 cartridges.
12-bore shot-gun and 200 cartridges.
.22 Winchester automatic and 1000 cartridges.
·450 revolver and 30 cartridges.
.38 revolver and 100 cartridges.
Rifle cartridges (sealed up in tins containing about 20 each).
Shot cartridges (sealed up in tins containing about 25 each).
1 small cartridge magazine.
Oil, tow, flannelette, vaseline.
Cartridge bag.

FIELD GLASSES, INSTRUMENTS, &c.

2 telescopes.
2 pairs Zeiss glasses.
1 aneroid, 15,000 feet.
Maximum and minimum thermometers.
2 watches.
1 kodak and 60 cartridges (in tins of 1 dozen each).
1 medicine case — bandages, lint, cotton wool, carbolic.
1 Bronsa tool.
Awl, file, leather punch.
Hammer, pliers.
1 shikar knife.
3 skinning knives.
1 pocket knife.
Measuring tape.
Coloured goggles.

SADDLERY.

Colonial pattern saddle and bridle complete.
Saddle bag.
Holster for pistol.
Nosebag.

TENTS

1 Cabul tent.
2 servants' tents.
1 kitchen tent.

CAMP FURNITURE

Bed.
Bath.
Enamelled basin, with cover.
Table, chairs, numdah.
Lord's lamp and 8 gallons oil.

BEDDING

Wolseley valise.
Waterproof sheet.
Sleeping bag.
2 eiderdown quilts.
3 blankets.
2 pillows.

BOOKS, &c.

"Records of Big Game" (R. Ward).
"Chinese Turkestan" (Church).
Maps.
Fiction (pocket editions of standard works).
Writing case. Despatch box.
Paper, pens, ink.

CLOTHING

Boots

3-4 pairs shooting boots (1-2 pairs to take 2 pairs socks comfortably).
1 pair Gilgit boots.
1 pair slippers.
Plenty of screw nails.

Suits

1 thick Norfolk suit.
1 Bedford cord Norfolk suit.
1 khaki drill Norfolk suit.
1 leather (all round) waistcoat.
1 pair flannel trousers.
3 pairs puttees.

N.B.—Pants are better to crawl in than knickerbockers or knickerbocker breeches.

Overcoats

1 poshteen.
1 fur-lined "British warm."
1 Burberry mackintosh.

Hats

1 Ellwood's cork helmet.
1 Kashmir hat.
1 shooting cap.
1 fur cap.

CLOTHING—*continued*

Sundries

2 knitted silk scarfs (khaki).
1 Shetland waistcoat.
1 Shetland muffler.
1 pair fur-lined gloves.
1 pair woollen gloves.
4 pairs kid gloves (mosquitoes).
1 waistbelt. 2 pairs braces.
1 housewife—buttons, needles, thread, wool for darning, &c., &c.
Shaving kit.
Hair brushes, comb, glass, sponges, &c.
3 bath towels.

Underclothing

4 thick flannel shirts.
3 thin flannel shirts.
4 pairs drawers.
6 vests.
6 pairs thick socks.
2 pairs pyjamas.
1 pair thin pyjamas.
Handkerchiefs, silk and cotton.

DURBAR OUTFIT

1 flannel suit (thin).
1 tweed suit.
2 shirts.
Collars. Ties.
Socks.
Shoes.

PRESENTS

18 knives.
3 Lungis (turbans).
3 shawls.
Preserved fruits and sweets.
6 silver presents.
Cigarettes.
Brandy.

SERVANT'S KIT, EACH

1 puttoo suit.
1 drill suit.
2 pairs puttees.
2 warm turbans.
1 pair boots.
1 poshteen.
1 waterproof cape.
1 pair woollen gloves.
2 pairs socks.
2 pairs chupplies.
4 pairs leather socks.
1 sweater.
2 blankets.
2 numdahs.
1 waterproof sheet (large).
1 khud stick.

LUNCH KIT

Small wicker basket.
Waterproof brief-bag.
Thermos bottle.

TABLE WARE

3 large plates.
4 small plates.
2 soup plates.
2 hot plates.
2 "iron ware" cups and saucers (earthenware).
2 mugs.
6 knives. 6 forks.
6 spoons.
Salt and pepper pots (small Keating's Powder tins do well).
1 milk jug.
1 egg cup.
1 pudding dish.
1 teapot.
4 glass screw-top jam-pots (jam, milk, sugar, butter).

COOKING UTENSILS, &c.

Set of degchies.
1 saucepan.
1 frying-pan.
1 aluminium mug.
Pair of iron cooking triangles.
2 baking tins.
1 cooking spoon.
1 pair cooking tongs.
1 chopper.
1 tin-opener.
1 corkscrew.
1 kitchen knife.
1 axe.
4 dozen dusters.

PROVISIONS

2 tins loaf sugar.
2 lbs. currants.
3 lbs. candied peel.
4 lbs. raisins.
12 tins sweets.
6 tins mixed biscuits.
6 bottles crystallised fruits.
} To entertain Chinese officials.

200 cigarettes.
50 cigars.
} For Russians.

6 boxes Pears' soap.
Californian tinned fruit.
2 boxes "Vinolia" soap.
6 tins army rations.
4 dozen soup tablets.
6 bottles jams (screw-topped).
6 tins milk.
10 tins Paisley flour.
12 tins oatmeal.
6 tins tapioca.
6 tins cornflour.
6 tins sago.
6 lbs. brown sugar.
12 tins curry powder.
15 tins tea.
22 tins butter.
12 tins cocoa.
6 tins biscuits.

PROVISIONS—*continued*

6 lbs. chocolate.
6 packets "Bromo."
18 packets candles.
6 boxes "Sunlight" soap.
6 tins cocoa and milk.
6 tins golden syrup.
4 bottles pepper.
2 tins mustard.
5 bottles essences.
12 tins paté.
3 tins coffee.
4 bottles Worcester sauce.
2 lbs. cheese.
1 bottle brandy (medicinal).
2 bottles whisky.
4 pints champagne (in case of severe fatigue).
20 lbs. potatoes.
3 lbs. apricots.
3 lbs. figs.
2 lbs. compressed vegetables.
9 bottles potted meat.
4 bottles prunes.
4 bottles honey.
2 tins arrowroot.
4 tins salmon.
2 tins cod roes.
3 tins peas.
4 lbs. macaroni.
3 bottles pickles.
10 lbs. sugar.
1 bottle "Eno."
3 tins dried ginger.
3 bottles anchovy.
1 bottle boot polish.
2 bottles tomato sauce.
1 tin barley.
12 pounds rice.
4 packets matches.
3 tins sausages.
12 packets table salt.
3 doz. tins baking powder.
4 tins marmalade.
40 lbs. flour.

SUNDRIES

2 dozen goggles.
15 locks.
3 sticks of shaving soap.
3 tins Keating's powder.
Castor oil (for boots).

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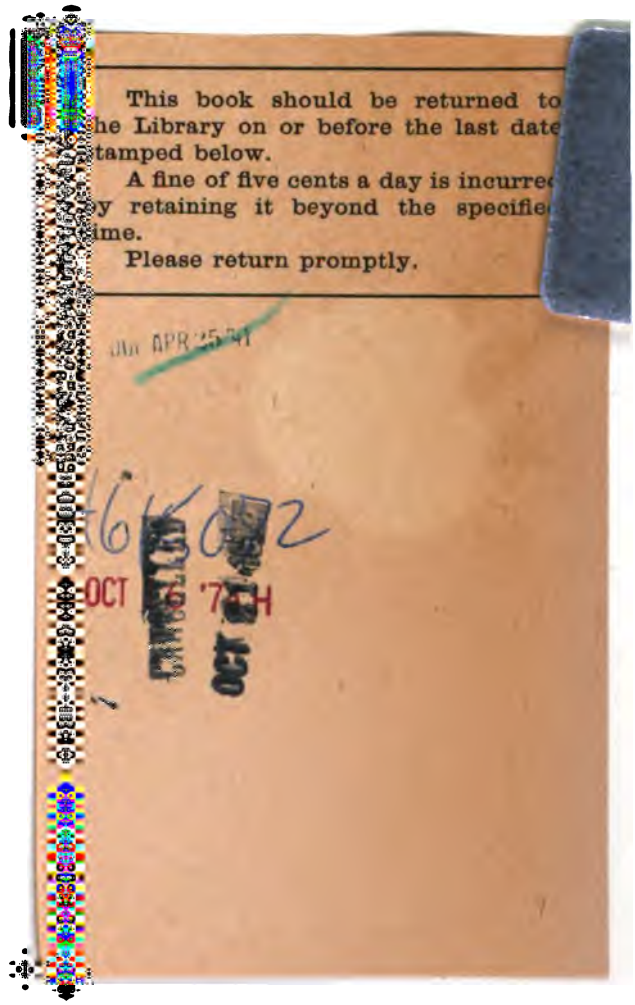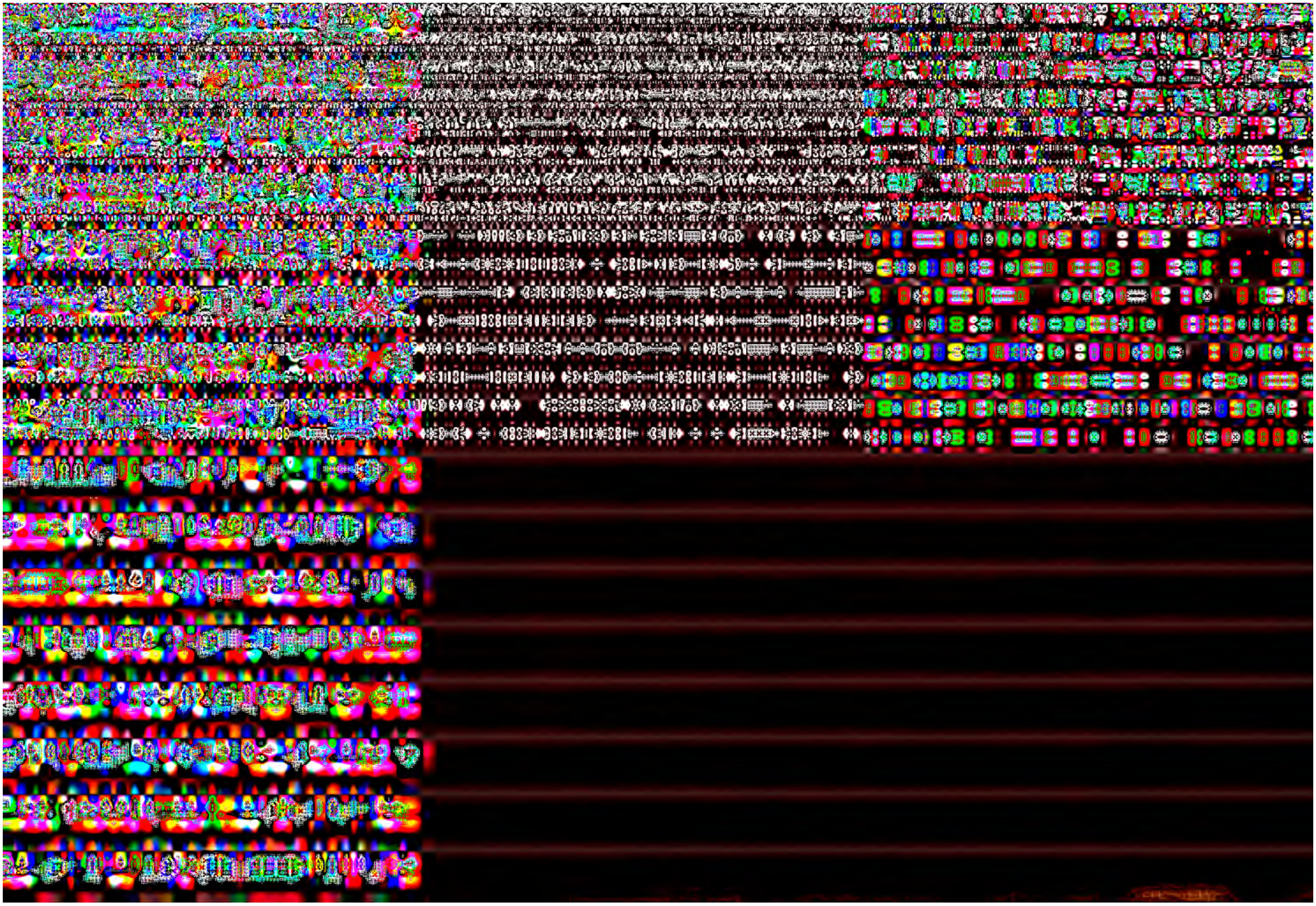
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